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## DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT FOR

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«Money debases all gods of mankind and turns them into commodities. Money is the universal and self-constituted value of all things. It has therefore deprived the entire world -both the world of man and nature- of its specific value. Money is the estranged essence of man's work and existence; this alien essence dominates him and he worships it.»

K.Marx, «On the jewish question»



Capitalism at work: the bombing of Dresden  
Some current examples of the progress of the capitalist State  
Social-democracy's eternal eurracist pacifism  
What reduction of working time ?

N° 10

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-The editorial staff-



# Capitalism at work :

## the bombing of Dresden - February 1945

With each bourgeois commemoration, the masters of historical falsification expend all their talent in reinforcing their hold over the amnesiac mass of citizens. In 1989 the bourgeoisie celebrated, in the course of the bicentenary of the so-called «French Revolution» (1), the purified reign of democracy and its sacrosanct «*Human Rights*»: «*Liberty*» to sell your labour power, «*Equality*» in exploitation and «*Fraternity*» between classes. During the fall of the Berlin Wall they made great preemptory clarion calls about «*the victory of democracy over totalitarianism*», «*the failure of communism*» and even «*the end of history*»... in short, these are ideal occasions for reinforcing the enlarged and structured framework of democracy as the only possible outcome for the future of humanity.

The sickening ceremonies of commemoration of the «Liberation» followed the same strategy. These campaigns of promotion of democracy addressed themselves directly to isolated individuals, the basic

kernel of this society, in order to integrate them, to fuse them together, to gather them behind the defence of the State. Even if today the gigantic media shows, organising lasers and noise in the street or in a packed stadium, have replaced the great Nazi masses of yesteryear, like the Nuremburg rallies and torch-lit marches with their compact, disciplined crowds in orderly ranks... all these mobilisations contribute very well and in an identical fashion to the same irrational and collective communion of adhesion to the fictive community of capital. Did not Hitler affirm, in his megalomaniac pretensions, just like «our» experts and economists today, that he had put an end to the existence of classes for at least a thousand years? In the manipulation of crowds and their irrational emotions, anti-fascism plays on the same scale as fascism. During the great collective masses, the bourgeois project affirms itself openly as was it is: a logic of the market tempered in steel, excluding any other approach to the future of humanity apart from that of the capitalist mode of production. Obtaining the adhesion of the isolated

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(1) If we distance ourselves from the dominant terminology concerning this question, it is because for us the years 1789-1793 were essentially **revolutionary** years from the point of view of the affirmation of the **proletariat** as a revolutionary class. Where official History heaps praise on the coming of the Enlightened bourgeoisie, we can find recuperation, the diversion of a proletarian struggle to the benefit of the reinforcement of the capitalist mode of production, whose revolution didn't take place in 1789 but throughout the XIV<sup>th</sup>, XV<sup>th</sup> and XVI<sup>th</sup> centuries, through the generalisation of the world market. We will return to this question shortly - we are already circulating a series of theses within our group.



individual to the Nation, to the Community of citizens requires that the war which can be seen every day between those who possess everything and those who have nothing but their labour power must be definitively hidden. So every critique is banished, every calling into question of the official historiography is equivalent to «revisionism». Here we can see how the fascist and anti-fascist myths have as their principal function the gathering of citizens into a fraternisation with the State and must serve as an outlet to reassure each person as to their future and above all the war-like future which capital is preparing.

Concealed behind this unanimous concert, the real causes and objectives of the war, which put the planet to fire and blood from 1939 to 1945, along with the causes of all the other wars, are more than ever hidden by a vast media campaign which promotes «the horror of the camps», «Nazi cruelty», «the excesses of war»... On one side the «goodies», on the other the «baddies». Apart from this truth there is nothing! The «anti-fascists» (2) quickly wash away their own massacres in the foul-smelling waters of the horrors of their fascist competitors. The bourgeois polarisation of fascism/anti-fascism functions as the two jaws of the same vice in organising the conscription of proletarians into two enemy camps, ending up inexorably in the preparation of a new «final solution» to social antagonisms: WAR!

In this struggle between the anti-fascist and fascist camps no one had the monopoly in the domain of «horror» and «barbarism». The two competitors, thirsting in the frantic search for new possibilities of profits, **both responded to the same necessities imposed by capital** to take destruction and death to a level never seen before. The totalitarian reign of democracy, the highest expression of capitalist civilisation, is thus crystallised in these moments of human prehistory that constitute the concentration camps, nuclear bombs, battle-fields, massive bombardments, war taken to extremes. It is under these terms that there materialised, to a degree unknown until then, a complete negation of the human species by class societies. We shall see here that, concerning this

atrocious war which flaunted itself from 1939 to 1945, the British, American, Russian, «allied», anti-fascist bourgeois really had nothing to envy the fascists for in their capacity to plan death.



In this text we will illustrate, on several occasions, the bourgeoisie's capacity to consciously realise the central objective of war for the reorganisation of capital: the destruction of productive forces and the destruction of the proletariat. Using various examples, we show how the massive destruction of the proletariat is carried out with impressive cynicism and consciousness. Does this imply a machiavellian viewpoint of history? Or the abandonment of dialectical materialism? No - and this for various reasons.

The first is that, above all, the bourgeoisie realises its class objectives and subjective expressions of the capitalist social system by seeking to liquidate its immediate enemy in war: by destroying its infrastructure, logistics and by the liquidation and demoralisation of its troops and working population, so indispensable on the productive front.

Secondly, the worldwide bourgeoisie has drawn lessons from past wars and revolutions and every bourgeois fraction is haunted by the spectre of Russia in 1917. Whilst revolutionaries at that time were hoping for a resurgence of the class out of the catastrophe of the war, all capital's military and civilian strategists knew that what they had to fear most was proletarian revolt in capital's most disorganised cities, in particular in countries such as Italy and Germany in which the army was disintegrating (as was also the case in Russia, despite the fact that this state was on the «winning» side of the war).

Lastly, although certain bourgeois fractions have always been aware that their system needs imperialist war, particularly the destruction of large sections of the proletariat in order to impose a cycle of successful accumulation, the bourgeoisie cannot voluntarily

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(2) We consider as definitive that **the only real enemy of fascism**, or of any other Bonapartist attempt put in place by the bourgeoisie to crush our class, **is the revolutionary proletariat**. But the revolutionary struggle against fascism cannot be separated from the struggle against all the other fractions of the bourgeoisie, including those claiming to be anti-fascist, who show nothing more than a desire to maintain capitalist exploitation under another form and under the dictatorship of other managers. In this sense, «anti-fascism», proclaimed by these factions, is most of the time **only the facade of anti-fascism which only makes use of this terminology from opportunism with the aim of more easily confronting a capitalist competitor**. Its «anti-fascism» is a banner under which it is occasionally easier to regroup its forces for its war. We only have to recall that Stalin started off choosing an alliance with Hitler and fascism, before taking up an alliance with Churchill and Roosevelt. The bourgeoisie is no more the enemy of fascism than any other form of capitalist management: the proletariat constitutes the only real grave-digger of the capitalist dictatorship, whether its attire is fascist, anti-fascist, popular, republican, anti-imperialist or Bonapartist.

change the course of history. The bourgeoisie is not the subject of history, but always and necessarily a puppet of capital carrying out its determinations independently of consciousness, always relative, by one or another protagonist.

In summary, the bourgeoisie as a class does not do what it wants, but what its social system historically

obliges it to do. This does not imply that we are ignoring that certain fractions of the dominant class act with consciousness and determination to maintain their social system. They always bear it in mind that, beyond their immediate enemy (the opposite side in imperialist war), it is a trap for their historical enemy (the proletariat) and these fractions do not spare any effort in their machiavellian preparation for its massacre.

## Terror From the Sky

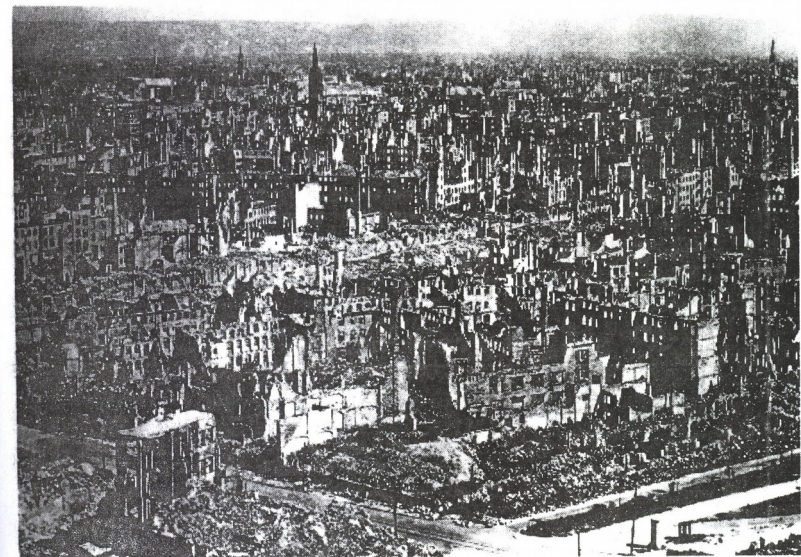
**F**rom 1940, the British strategy put in place by «Bomber Command», the Head Quarters of those flying heavy bombers, had as its objective the massive scattering of death and destruction on German towns. To justify putting in place such a veritable strategy of terror, to ideologically cover its launch, the British bourgeoisie used the bombings of London and Coventry during the Autumn of 1940 and those of Rotterdam by their German competitors, deliberately exaggerating their extent. With the ideological misinformation thus orchestrated, the brass-hats were able to put all the science of killing at the service of sick capitalism. In March 1942, they affirmed:

*«An offensive of extensive bombing could sap the morale of the enemy provided they are directed*

*against the workers' districts [our emphasis] of 58 German towns, each one having a population of 100,000 inhabitants. Between March 1942 and the middle of 1943, it should be possible to make a third of the total population of Germany homeless.»*

(Final Report of Professor Lindemann from 30 March 1942 at the request of Bomber Command)

While the bourgeoisie has the advantage of being so clear amongst themselves, a second discourse was very rapidly put into place with a view to reinforcing, amongst the citizens of the «free world», the belief that the anti-fascist camp was organising the war in a humanitarian way. It was obviously a question of





presenting «barbarism» and cruelty as being the unique prerogative of the opposing camp. Mystification feeds off itself - it turned out to be necessary to reinforce its impact amongst the crowds submitted to the war project of the bourgeoisie in their confiding that:

*«... Bomber Command only bombs for purely military purposes and only aims at achieving military objectives, any suggestions of attacks on working class or residential areas we reject as absurd and an attack on the honour of the airmen who sacrifice their lives for their country...»*

However, despite all the lies intended to camouflage the sinister reality, nothing was going to stop the bourgeoisie, with all its characteristic cynicism, from specifying more precisely the aim of these bombings: systematic carnage.

*«... it is clear that the aiming points are to be the built-up areas, not, for instance, the dockyards or aircraft factories... This must be made quite clear if it is not already understood.»*

(Report of the Chief of Air Staff Sir Charles Portal, 14 February 1942)

After three years of putting in place various bombing strategies, the degree of precision of terror reached a very appreciable level of effectiveness. At this point, more than a hundred four-engined aircraft would take part in successive waves of bombing of a single town. The first highly bloody illustration of this reality was the bombing of Wuppertal in May 1943, where the military objectives concentrated in the Elberfeld district were at first systematically avoided in favour of the workers' residential districts of Barmen.

**«Beaverbrook was inspecting a big aircraft factory, when he saw a new type of plane. He Asked when the plane would be ready, and he was told «two months». He said he must have this new type at once. It must be up in the air and bombing Berlin within two days.**

**The whole factory was organized into getting the plane ready in two days. The whole production schedule was disorganized, the assembly line stripped, everything concentrated on to the plane. By a stupendous effort of organization the plane was ready in two days, flown to the aerodrome, and handed over to the R.A.F. The job Beaverbrook asked for had been done, though the production of the factory would be interfered with for weeks after.**

**That night, within forty-eight hours of Beaverbrook's visit, the plane went over to bomb Berlin.**

**When the bomb aimer pulled the stick out fell two members of the night shift.»**

Angus Calder: «The people's War» - Britain 1939-1945  
Through the tunnel: October 1940 to December 1942  
Reading 1969  
Source of quote 69-Mass Observation  
Report pp 60-61



But the anti-fascist pole, like its fascist competitor, came to surpass itself in the organisation of horror. Capital, suffering from devalorisation as if from a cancer, couldn't find provisory relief in any other remedy than the growth of its destructive capacity. It is in effect **during war and by war** that this dying system reaches the high point of the overturning and complete revolutionising of its productive base, permitting it thus to create new conditions for assuring a new phase of valorisation. **Physical destruction pure and simple** of the means of production is only at bottom the pursuit of the commercial war that the various competitors abandon themselves to even more than usual. For open war earns its keep not only in the area of development of the productive forces, but also in its extension in the

military economy. It should not be surprising therefore that that epoch was one in which new inventions, new technologies, new concepts saw the light of day. It is still and always in death that the white-coated worshippers of Mammon surpass themselves. While the V1 rocket was being patiently elaborated on the fascist side, in July 1943 the bombardment of Hamburg by anti-fascist aircraft marked the inauguration of the **era of fire-storms**. It was by the massive utilisation of incendiary bombs that the death of more than 50,000 people was to be caused, along with 40,000 wounded on the same occasion. The centre of the town was entirely destroyed and, in three nights, the total number of victims in Hamburg reached, without entering here into a polemic of macabre figures, the number killed on the British side during the whole duration of the war. After this it was the turn of Kassel where, in October 1943, 10,000 civilians would perish as if in a giant brasier. The fire-storms materialised the capacity of Capital to refine and rationalise death to an ever greater extent:

*«... the sudden linking of a great number of fires, the air above was heated to such an extent that a violent updraught occurred which, in turn, caused the surrounding fresh air to be sucked in from all sides to the centre of the fire area. This tremendous suction caused movements of air of far greater force than normal winds. In meteorology the differences of temperature involved are of the order of 20° to 30°C. In this fire-storm they were of the order of 600°, 800° or even 1000°C. This explained the colossal force of the fire-storm winds... No sort of civilian protection measure can ever contain a fire-storm once it has emerged. They are clearly monsters created by man [sic, we would say Capital!] which no man can ever tame.»*

(Report of the Police President of Hamburg of the bombing of July 1943)

The only response to this unprecedented human genocide was to be found in the concrete shelters where the inhabitants crammed themselves, like frightened animals, in the hope of escaping the explosions and flames. But in these bunkers, transformed into gigantic pressure cookers, men, women, children... were done in inexorably by lack of oxygen or by being cooked, literally like meat on a grill.

*«When the rescue teams finally, at the end of several weeks, forced their way into the bunkers and the hermetically sealed houses, the heat*

*created inside had been so intense that there was nothing left of their occupants: they found only a fine layer of undulating grey dust in one bunker; they could only estimate the number of victims as being between 250 and 300 (...) The abnormal temperatures in these bunkers were also attested to by the pools of melted metal which were originally the pots, pans and cooking utensils kept in the houses.» (3)*

Faced with the scale of damage caused to civilian populations, questions began to be asked. It was impossible to unload all those bombs without causing horrifying damage to civilians. Invariably the anti-fascist British government responded to this with the same assurance and the same arrogance:

*«... no instruction has been given to destroy dwelling houses ... the targets of Bomber Command are always military»*

(Secretary of State for the Air Sir Archibald Sinclair, 31 March 1943)

Then, in the world of lies erected into a system of a single permitted thought, the useful idiot of capital continues to swallow and reproduce the dominant discourse. The infernal round of bombers, carrying in their holds the future promise of good business, once more carried out the aim of foretold carnage, and returned again. During 1944, perfecting their technique to the point where not a single square meter of an inhabited area could escape the incendiary bombs, raids on Königsberg (end of August), Darmstadt (September), Braunschweig (October), Heilbronn (December), Bremerhaven etc. claimed many tens of thousands of victims, caught in the jaws of gigantic brasiers. Ideological misinformation remained total and, day after day, hundreds of bombers, dropping thousands and thousands of bombs, took off from Britain for Germany. For the man in the street this represented the adequate response to the horrors of the other camp.

While public opinion mumbled the stupidities that its masters concocted for it, on both sides of the front, others arranged to remove all traces of the desired carnage, thought out and organised with full knowledge of what would happen. Thus, the American General Eaker declared at the same time:

*«We should never allow the history of this war to convict us of throwing the strategic bomber at the man in the street.»*

(3) This quotation is taken from the book by David Irving, *«The Destruction of Dresden»*, PAPERMAC, 1985.



All the same, fifteen days before this declaration, a raid carried out by American bombers on Berlin had caused the death of 25,000 people, something that this brass-hatted jackal did not ignore. You can't help thinking again about the lies and cynicism which prevailed during the whole of the Gulf War (4), and discovering there a long and solid tradition, not only in the US Army, but equally in all of the bourgeoisie past and future. Lies which have no other aim than to mask the gigantic effort which leads this capitalist society to perfect its arsenal of terror and destruction. War represents for it a gigantic living laboratory of technological experiments and above all a gigantic source of profits.

If the fascist camp came to profit from putting in place a great number of scientific discoveries such as the V1 and V2 rockets, thanks to the concentration camp slaves, what can be said about their direct competitors? Bombs which were always bigger, always more powerful and still more destructive were systematically

developed. Thus, faced with the ineffectiveness of traditional bombs, which rarely hit their target, armour-piercing bombs were developed, so that a maximum number of proletarians could be massacred. They must have known that during bombardments, when proletarians buried themselves in subterranean dwellings or cellars, the explosion of a classic bomb on impact with a building would only take place most of the time at the highest part of the building. The genius of the bourgeoisie therefore came to struggle to get the better of the bomb fodder, who were not allowing themselves to be massacred so easily. Consequently, the scientific scum, who never miss a dirty trick, invented an armament capable of finding the human flesh where it had hidden itself. It is logical that the bombs should explode in the deepest rat holes. So, during the first impact, the new bomb doesn't explode. It goes through the roof, penetrates the floorboards and only explodes once its real objective is reached: the reinforced cellars.

## The Everest of Terror : the Bombing of Dresden

The torrent of deaths following the aerial bombardments, with workers as the principal victims, was to reach its paroxysm in Dresden, in February 1945, in the raid which was the most terroristic and the most incomprehensible of the whole war - incomprehensible to those who still had illusions in the humanity of the imperialist, anti-fascist camp. From a strictly military point of view, nothing could justify the additional massacre which took place when Germany was already defeated. Nothing, if it wasn't the immediate announcement of the coming end of the blood bath and the obvious desire of the victorious fraction of the bourgeoisie to destroy everything which still could be destroyed.

Dresden did not have any strategically vital industry, nor any important military installation. And it is, moreover, for this reason that the town constituted a refuge for hundreds of thousands of people fleeing the bombings and the advance of the Soviet army, another joyous army of massacrers. Blinded by the propaganda

of the Allies, persuaded that Dresden would never be bombed, all these refugees crammed themselves into the numerous hospitals of the town and stormed the schools, the railway stations and so on. The British government did not ignore these facts, and this is true up to a point that some military chiefs of Bomber Command expressed serious reservations as to the military validity of such an objective. In effect it was something difficult to swallow, even for the pilots, that a few weeks before the end of the war, when on all fronts the German troops were in open retreat and disarray, that there could exist any military objective in the organisation of the biggest massacre of the whole war. To this, it was drily replied that Dresden constituted a **priority** objective: in the midst of the Yalta conference, it was a question of putting themselves in a position of strength, thanks to the bombings, in the face of the rapid advance of Russian troops.

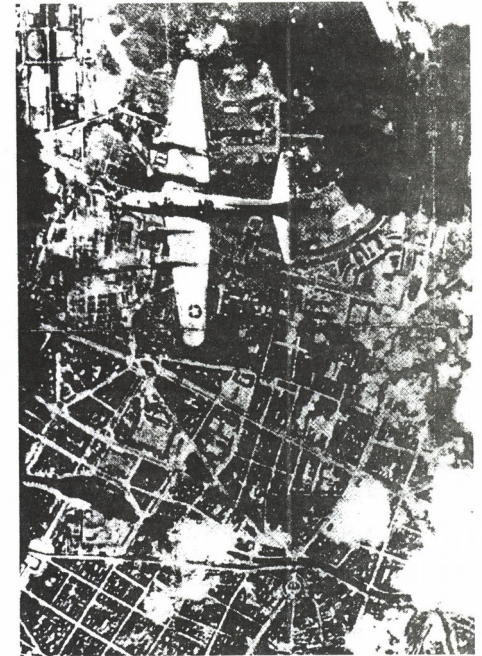
The bombing of the town took place on 13 and 14 February 1945. The bourgeoisie wasn't unaware that

(4) See our text «*War or Revolution*» in *Communism* No. 7, April 1992.

there were close to a million and a half people, of which a great number were refugees from the province of Silesia, many injured, prisoners of war, labour deportees... The greatest tonnage of bombs ever used was thus unloaded over two nights: close to 3000 tonnes, 650,000 incendiary bombs fell on the town, producing the biggest fire-storm of the whole war. The fire winds which consumed the town travelled at from 200 to 300km per hour. Dresden would burn for eight days during which the glow of the fire would be visible from 300 kilometres! Some parts of the town burned so strongly that it would only be several weeks later that the cellars could be entered. The whole panoply of the most murderous bombs was used: phosphorus, napalm... People, veritable human torches, threw themselves into the Elbe where they continued to burn, the flow of fire which descended from the centre of the town towards the Elbe reached the river and continued to destroy. Decapitated corpses, victims of «anti-personnel» fragmentation bombs, littered the streets. Of 35,000 inhabited buildings, only 7,000 remained standing. The whole centre of the town disappeared over an area of 18km<sup>2</sup>. Most of the hospitals were destroyed, while the railways were hardly touched and neither the military airfield nor the various factories round about were targeted.

The intervention was carried out in a methodical fashion: those who conceived it had even taken account of the wind so that the fire could develop with a horrifying rapidity. On the night of 13 and 14 February 1945, more than a thousand British bombers came to sow terror. The next day, 450 American Flying Fortresses took up the relay in unloading 771 tonnes of incendiaries, of which a great number were delayed action. This «novelty» allowed Bomber Command to assure for itself an even more impressive bag. These bombs, which didn't explode until several hours after the aeroplanes had passed, would kill not only those who tried to put out the fires, but all those careless enough to flee from the burning town. The balance sheet which was without contest one of the highest expressions of Civilisation and Progress surpassed the figure of 250,000 dead, almost all civilians, to say nothing of the tens of thousands of wounded, burned, dying, maimed, insane...

*«... ten days after the bombing, a group of prisoners had cleared the steps leading into a basement, but they refused to go in. Something out of the ordinary had happened inside. The men stood sullenly around round the basement entrance, as the civilian Director, wishing to set an example, marched down the steps to the cellar, an acetylene lamp in his hand. He was reassured by the lack of the usual smell of decay. The bottom steps were slippery. The cellar floor was covered*



*by a twenty centimetre deep liquid mixture of blood, flesh and bone; a small high-explosive bomb had penetrated four floors of the building and exploded in the basement. (...) They learned from the caretaker of the block that there must have been 200 to 300 people in the cellar on the night.»*

(Hans Voigt, director of «Abteilung Tote», the «dead person's bureau» charged with cleaning the city of corpses)

Because of the risk of an epidemic the centre of town was declared to be off-limits. Each day thousands of bodies, or at least what was left of them, were dragged into the central square of the town, to be, after a last attempt at identification, crammed onto pyres of 400 to 500 corpses to be burnt. Close to 70,000 victims were thus incinerated on the Altmarkt as a protective measure. For the first time in the history of the war the survivors were not numerous enough to bury the dead. The apocalypse hit this region like a thunderbolt. For several weeks a horrible smell of putrefaction mixed with that of charred human flesh hung over the ruins and the surrounding area. Packs of dogs roamed the rubble looking for corpses. Ten of thousands of ghostly figures wandered the roads in search of refuge, with haggard eyes and in rags, the veritable living dead. It is



almost impossible with these words, or with figures, to be able to describe in its deepest reality this veritable apocalypse. The vocabulary which we use to communicate today is too poor to express the disgust, the hatred that is inspired in us by such a systematic, methodical, scientific organisation of terror, of death! And the disgust which we feel towards these greatest acts of the anti-fascist bourgeoisie is all the deeper because of the way that they bury all critique against themselves by denouncing precisely... **the systematic, methodical, scientific organisation of terror** as being the monopoly of their competitors. Here capital has hit hard, very hard.

But the horror that the bourgeoisie is capable of deploying is without limit. The Allied hunters went on to machine-gun the columns of refugees who were fleeing from the town put to fire and blood, just as help was arriving from the neighbouring areas. Ordering the bombing of Chemnitz in the days following, the Allied commander didn't mince words, declaring to the pilots:

*«The reason you are going there tonight is to*

*finish off the refugees who managed to escape from Dresden.»*

Like a pack intoxicated by the smell of blood, these guard dogs of capitalism cried out for new orgies of blood-letting to assuage their hunger for more corpses. The anti-fascist alliance had decidedly nothing to learn from the fascist coalition when it comes to the refinement with which they assured the survival of this moribund civilisation. In 18 months of bombings, 45 of the 60 principal German towns had been completely destroyed, razed, crushed. At the very least, 650,000 proletarians, the majority civilians, were to perish in the course of the terror raids, without even mentioning those who, having escaped this hell, would spend the rest of their lives in hospitals and lunatic asylums. It is truly on mounds of corpses that the victory of the anti-fascist camp would be celebrated on 8 May 1945.

A beautiful «Victory» indeed, that of having hidden their own crimes under the mattress of the horrors of the competitor. A beautiful «Victory» celebrated with lanterns on a field of corpses!

## But how was such a massacre explained at the time?

Reading «Le Soir», the big official Belgian daily paper, is edifying. The information about the bombing of Dresden was given two days later, in a little box coincidentally between the obituaries and the list of the day's shows. There we can read that 1,400 RAF bombers have attacked Dresden with the petrol refinery of Bohlen as their target (we should recall that this refinery remained intact). On the first page there's not a single trace of the 250,000 dead of Dresden. They are crushed under information about... the Yalta peace agreements. A little lower down, by contrast, a little commentary concludes: *«also it is only by the brutal force of arms that they will finish off that race of fanatics»!* The demonisation of the enemy and the discourse of peace. On one side, purely and simply covering up the crimes of the victors, on the other side: the methods of disinformation of the «Allies» hardly differ from those of the «Nazis», no more than the methods still used today to justify the Gulf War or to hide the attendant proletarian insurrections, for example. In all cases the disinformation has the same function: to chain proletarians to a nation and deny the identity of interests of the proletariat across all frontiers and all nations.

# The Capitalist Necessity for War

The more Capital develops the more all its contradictions grow, are exacerbated. It is not by chance that war always exists in one part of the world or another, that it regularly extends itself in a more and more generalised form. The struggle to maximise profit, competition, commercial war and war in general, are as essential to the capitalists as breathing is to a human being.

It is a matter of fact that this society cannot live without war. To express it very schematically here (5), the reason is that the mass of capital grows more rapidly than the possibilities of its valorisation. Thus, cyclically, an overproduction of capital occurs, having as a consequence that the valorisation of one part of social capital excludes the valorisation of another part of the same world social capital. The closure of factories, or the scrapping of other fixed capitals, is never enough to re-stabilise the situation. A generalised depression regularly occurs, leading inevitably to a general devalorisation of all existing capital. When Capital encounters no possibility of profitability, it must «normally» lead to the generalised bankruptcy of the less profitable capitals. These, like all the others, organise themselves to resist this inexorable law of capital. The organisation of some or other of them, at various levels of centralisation, with the aim of carrying out this war in the best possible circumstances (associations, cartels, national states, blocs or



constellations of states) renders war periodically effective: it presents itself as a partial solution to the problems of world capital. In destroying an important part of capital, and therefore in preventing the functioning of it, war ameliorates the general conditions of the whole of world social capital. War thus permits it to relaunch, on a new basis, a new cycle of valorisation. On the other hand, this solution only makes the problem even more insoluble for the capitalists to come. A new phase of overproduction of capital, even more important than the preceding one, intervenes, making necessary the violent devalorisation - by destruction - of always more means of production.

The so-called «Second World War» does not escape from these invariable laws of capitalism. It is not in the head of some Hitler, any more than in the head of a Stalin or a Truman, that we can find an explanation for this gigantic carnage, but **only** in the entrails of this society that many, above all amongst the proletariat today, find it difficult to recognise for what it is: a class society. In place of this evidence, the bourgeoisie presses to reinforce the stupidities that it fabricates for its public opinion, showering the brave citizen, that sinister **homo democraticus**, with commemorations, military parades, stories recounting the psychology of such and such an idiot useful to capital, with the aim of making him accept the unacceptable: participation in war to save its moribund system.

(5) For a more important development of the question, we refer our readers to our texts «Capital: totalité et guerre impérialiste» in *Communisme* No.33, May 1991, and «Contre la guerre impérialiste: la révolution communiste mondiale» published in our central review then called *Le Communiste* No.14, July 1982.



## ...and the proletariat in all this

**I**n this text so far we have spoken of the proletariat as an object of history, as fodder for factories, cannons and bombs. We cannot publish this text without at least mentioning the **tendencies** for our class to impose itself as a subject, fighting for its own interests, imposing communism as the only affirmation of our humanity. To say «*the proletariat is a class which is exploited AND revolutionary*» (K. Marx), is not to say that it is **either** exploited **or** revolutionary, that it is **either** the object **or** the subject of history, but that it is **dialectically** both. Even if it was defeated at the end of the war, if revolution was not the order of the day, if it was enroled into the bourgeois polarisation fascism/anti-fascism, and above all if it was crushed by the bombs and the terror, the proletariat, like the old mole of Marx, nevertheless always manifested itself to some extent as subject, through its struggles, and in opposition to those who try to reduce it to a simple object of exploitation.

As we have seen already, far from being limited to a question of interbourgeois competition, the war strategy of extermination aims to massively liquidate a maximum of excess productive forces for the valorisation needs of this society of death. But we cannot limit our analysis to this single aspect of the question. The elimination of battalions of proletarians, those thousands of tonnes of bombs dropped on working class areas, materialise the capacity of our class enemy to preemptively hit every area of proletarian tension. If the proletariat of the years 1939-45, atomised within the inter-bourgeois polarisations, failed more or less to recognise itself as the proletariat, the bourgeoisie, for its part, was able, beyond its ideological divergences, to hit it wherever the danger appeared, in the impersonal interests of its World State.

It was also therefore so as not to see a replay of the preceding insurrectional wave, that the Allied aircraft had as their mission the bombardment, during the terrorist raids, of not only the German industrial centres, but also the biggest population centres, massacring and terrorising always more proletarians. Far from being blind, these bombings were on the contrary very selective: it was above all working class areas which were the targets of Allied carpet bombing.

This annihilation was «justified» all the more urgently from the beginning of 1943, when, amongst concentrations of proletarians in Europe, struggle and

resistance to exploitation once more appeared. Numerous bourgeois myths perpetuated the idea that the social situation at the end of the war was peaceful, or at least it was bathed in the consensus of «liberation from fascism». We want to affirm against the current that, **in the whole of Europe** at that time, under the blows of material necessity, **threats** of proletarian conflagrations caused the **spectre** of social revolution to reappear. A real movement seemed to reemerge, putting forward everywhere the satisfaction of our needs.

To be sure, **1945 was not 1918!**... and most of the few nuclei of revolutionary militants of the period, who managed to maintain a classist course in the storm of counter-revolution, had to a large extent overestimated the perspective for struggle, concluding in a mechanical way that a proletarian uprising was imminent in Germany as in 1918. The sites of struggle which did appear were rather feeble and above all were marked by more than 25 years of counter-revolutionary terror: 25 years in which the communist *avant-garde* had been liquidated. Over more than two decades the bourgeoisie had perfected its cycle of counter-revolution and a good number of militants of the wave of 1917-21 had disappeared into the concentration camps, had been massacred on the fields of horror, or had even been enroled into the Stalinist parties and ground down by the «Party of Order».

The world bourgeoisie, taking some lessons from the revolutionary wave, had given itself such material means so that it no longer had to confront a disintegrating army, a defeatist proletariat which was turning its arms against its own generals, against its own bourgeoisie, able to transform itself into new battalions of revolution. Thanks to the means of destruction qualitatively and quantitatively superior to the previous phase of **this class war**, the bourgeoisie made it their duty to take on class liquidation, class «genocide», not merely of millions of proletarians in uniform but also hundreds of thousands of «civilian» proletarians.

It is not by chance either that the terror bombings were systematised at the moment when important strikes broke out in Germany (and also in Italy, France, etc. (6)) and when desertions in the German army began to increase. This is an expression of the complementarity of the «rival» fractions of the bourgeoisie in anti-

proletarian repression. The working class was caught between the frying pan and the fire: on one side the terror coming from the sky and, on the other, the firing squads who force the strikers to continue «war production» for the «final victory».

At the end of the so-called «Second World War» the bourgeoisie closed off a cycle of war by the temporary neutralisation of the proletariat. The two world wars were two moments of a gigantic anti-proletarian massacre extending from 1914 to 1945 and interrupted in 1917-18 by the proletariat in struggle. It is only on this level of abstraction of the reality of capital that we can make sense of events which, for bourgeois historians, prove to be incomprehensible, to be the malicious work of an «evil genius»: Hitler, Stalin, Roosevelt, Churchill or some other... This is the idealist personification of history which obscures the real, open, anti-proletarian significance of all wars, whether they are anti-fascist, «for national liberation», «for the defence of socialism» or some other anti-human justification.

The end of the war therefore came to be a field of extraordinary experiments for the bourgeoisie. They applied a number of lessons learnt from the preceding struggles undertaken against the proletariat. More precisely, it was so as to prevent the renewal of the revolutionary situation which had marked Germany at the end of the so-called «First World War» (1914-18), it was to preventatively suppress any proletarian uprising, that the bourgeoisie came to orient its activity around three principal axes in 1945:

1/ Liquidating the proletarians able to constitute a threat and thus physically crush any attempt at proletarian resistance in the cities;

2/ in this sense to completely invade Germany and occupy it militarily using the Allied armies charged with upholding order; the German government is dissolved, the Allied armies enter Berlin;

3/ maintain outside Germany for several months, even several years, the imprisoned soldiers (interned on a massive scale) so as to avoid reproducing the upsets of November 1918; clearly the prospect of demobilised «German» soldiers returning to their destroyed homes made an impression on the world bourgeoisie to the point that not only did they send hundreds of thousands of these soldiers into the Soviet Gulag, but they also interned more than 400,000, some of them in Britain up until 1948! Others were sent to camps in France, in Belgium, or on the other side of the Atlantic, to the USA (7).



(6) We can recall, as we have already done in our review *Communisme* No.41 of December 1994 («*Nous soulignons: '50 ans de paix... cela se fête!'*») that the important class struggles developed not only - as is better known - in Northern Italy (43-45) and in Greece, but also in Germany, in Belgium, in France, in Yugoslavia, even in Russia. And as if by chance, while the concentrations of workers in places such as Milan, Turin and Rome had never been bombed during the war, it was when Italy fell into the Allied camp, and particularly during the outbreak of strikes, that the Allied air forces felt the necessity to bomb these regions, to restore social peace through terror.

(7) Is it really necessary to point out here that we are talking about measures only taken against proletarians? As for the generals, the Nazi officers, the industrialists, the scientists... apart from some odd scumbags who were liquidated during the great spectacle of the Nuremburg trials, most of the German bourgeoisie would be promoted to high positions in the opposing camp (scientists like Von Braun, for example), would be imprisoned for a while (which would in any case be less unpleasant than being subjected to forced labour like most of the soldiers), then released to set out on a capitalist career in the «new» Germany. So, when H. M. Schleyer was executed by the Red Army Faction, we learned that this boss of German bosses had in fact been an old Nazi dignitary.



The proletariat, as we affirm in our thesis No.26 (see: «*Theses of Programmatic Orientation*») has only one war to call for and to undertake: the social war against the whole of the bourgeoisie.

*«Workers have no homeland, one cannot take away from them what doesn't belong to them. Any form of defence of the nation, under whatever pretext is an attack on the worldwide working class. Under the reign of the bourgeoisie, all wars are **imperialist wars** with two or more opposing factions or groups whose interests are world capital. Proletariat wages and claims only one war: social war against the whole bourgeoisie. Independently of the direct intentions of the protagonists, the essential role of wars is to affirm Capital and to smash objectively and subjectively the subversive class within this society. In this sense, wars are never merely wars between National States, between the forces of «national liberation» and the «imperialist» forces, or wars between «imperialists», they are essentially **wars of Capital against communism.***

*Against all interbourgeois antagonisms between «progressive» and «reactionary» factions, «fascist» and «anti-fascist» factions, «left wing» and «right wing» factions,... the logical continuity of which are imperialist wars, the proletariat has no other solution but the intransigent struggle for its own class interests against all sacrifices, against all truce, all national solidarity: **revolutionary defeatism**, turning its weapons against its «own» direct exploiters, against its «own» direct oppressors. The proletariat's aim is to transform through the international centralisation of this community of struggle against Capital) capitalist war into a revolutionary war of the world proletariat against the world bourgeoisie.*

It is this long thesis that we are reaffirming in conclusion of this text by recalling that, from Dresden to Rotterdam, from Hiroshima to London, from Stalingrad to Warsaw, the only «Victory» which mattered in 1945 was, definitively, that of the bourgeoisie. In 1945 capitalist exploitation was able to endure on the basis of the crushing of the proletariat. A moment of the perpetuation of this defeat was concentrated in the credit accorded to the «Allied», «anti-fascist» crimes, under cover of the publicity given only to the crimes of the other camp. It is good to remember that: **fascist or anti-fascist, the dictatorship of Capital is democracy.**

We call on our readers not to remain passive but to struggle with us against the amnesia with which the bourgeoisie attack us. We ask them not only to criticise this text, but also to make material available to us which allows us to better understand the history of our class and its struggle in the years 1939-45. We shall return to all this in succeeding issues.

## Additional notes on the bombing of Dresden

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**F**ollowing the publication of the article «Le capitalisme a l'oeuvre: le bombardement de Dresde - février 1945" in *Communisme* No.42 (in French), a reader sent us some additional information which we have published below. This comrade's notes confirm what we stated in the article, illustrating that there is nothing to choose between the atrocities of the so-called anti-fascists and the fascists. Whenever it is a question of annihilating masses of proletarians who are either of no use to the State or are a danger to social peace, War and Science work together in perfect harmony. The class in whose service they are working then shows its true face: barbarity. Whatever democratic colours it wears -Nazi, stalinist, liberal... - bourgeoisie always means torture.

*«It is of greatest importance to fight against the lies justifying the '39-'45 war, as stressed by the article on the bombing of Dresden. However, it seemed to me that the article had omitted certain details which could be very useful in showing that the barbarity was in no way confined to one side.*

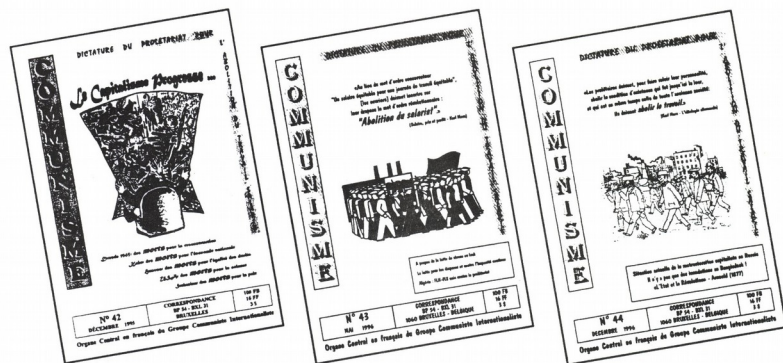
*The bomb attacks on Hamburg, Kassel, Darmstadt and Brunswick had not been specifically designed to provoke storms of fire, which had been an unexpected outcome of the bombing. However, in Dresden, firestorms were the aim. This is evidenced by the choice of bombs and the way in which they were used: explosive bombs were dropped first, smashing windows and roofs and then incendiary bombs (which made up 75% of the bombs carried by the first wave bombers), spreading fire throughout the whole city, which, by then, had airstreams blowing violently across it.*

*The second wave aimed at destroying the rescue brigades that were trying to save any that could be saved, the fire brigades trying to put out the fire and the convoys of trucks bringing aid. The rescuers were not only the target of the fighter-bombers, but of a whole wave of bombers who had been given specific official orders to destroy them. The fighters' official mission was to go in and 'finish the job' after the bombers had completed their attack.*

*(...) The Dresden-Klotzsche aerodrome (where hundreds of planes remained firmly on the ground during the whole bombing) (...) was totally spared by the bombers flying over it. Thus a military objective, easily within reach of the bombers that were supposed to attack only military targets, was left intact.*

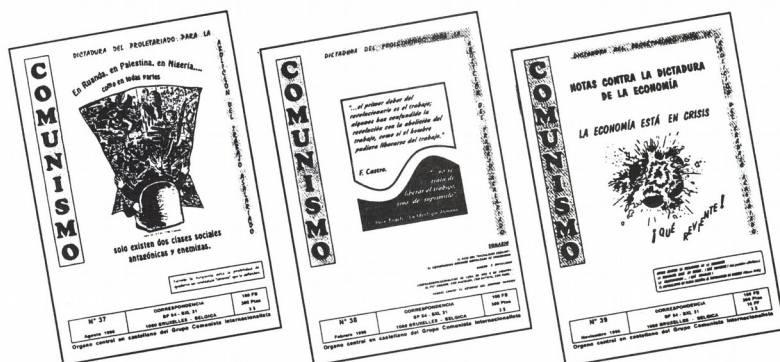
*During the Nuremberg trial (and while denouncing the Nazis' horrors), the US government (instigators of the trial) integrated some Japanese scientists into their research teams on bacteriological and chemical weapons. These scientists had already acted extremely ruthlessly in occupied Chinese territory, carrying out experiments in their research units on prisoners-of-war and on the Chinese population on a large scale. They had tested the limits of human resistance to cold and heat, means of spreading diseases amongst civilians (provoking a plague epidemic in the region of Nankin by dropping containers full of contaminated fleas) and other similar experiments. When Japan surrendered, the Americans (who were lagging behind Russia in the field of bacteriological and chemical warfare research) camouflaged their rehabilitation of these criminals by sacrificing their Nazi alter-egos, who were less advanced in such research. Therefore, the Nazi scientists were not made to pay for the horror of the experiments they carried out, but for the fact that they had failed to produce enough results!»*





COMMUNISME No. 42, 43 and 44...

...COMUNISMO No. 37, 38 and 39



# COMRADES

This review is produced by militants whose first language is not English. We arranged for comrades and sympathizers to translate the texts for this review because we see the necessity for internationalism. We are fully aware that there remain various mistakes and imperfections. It is up to you to help us make the next issue better in both content and form.

We badly need English language documents, books, reviews,... on the communist movement to help write and translate articles. We ask our readers to contact us if they wish to give or exchange such titles (e.g. for similar French texts).

# Some current examples of the **Progress** of Capitalist State

**T**he positivist ideology of progress, inherent to social-democracy and more generally to the whole of bourgeois leftism, always leads to support for capitalist progress. In opposition to this vision, we have always demonstrated the total antagonism between our interests and the progress of capitalism and of the State.

From capital's point of view, the colonisation of America represented extraordinary progress, as did the generalisation of slavery. The same goes for the war economy, the accumulation of value, technological development and the militarisation and effective control of the population. The World Wars, or more recently the Vietnam and Gulf wars, were yet further milestones on the road of capitalist progress and barbarity.

At the same time, the State - that is capital concentrated into a force of oppression and domination - has also made much progress, such as the generalisation of the vote, the massive development of prisons, police control of whole populations, the unionisation of the working class, the widespread obligation to carry an I.D. card and the scientific analysis of fingerprints... In the same way, the State has reinforced its role not only by deepening the historical separation between producers and their means of production - so that every being depends on the sale of his labour force, to an ever-increasing extent - but also by controlling and officialising a large number of

activities that were previously performed in a particular way. The progress of capital and the State cannot be summarised by the fact that the inhabitants of the tropics today consume Coca-Cola rather than coconut milk or that they eat rice rather than fish: that the common run of people give birth in hospital, are forced to register their children, feel obliged to have a church or a civil wedding and can no longer even bring up their own children as, in order to be able to go to work, they have to leave them in a nursery.

All these types of progress have a mutual influence on each other. The more capital develops, the more it opposes humanity and the more necessary oppression and dictatorship become. Throughout antiquity there has never been any king, any tyrant who had such vast control over his subjects or such an enormous repressive apparatus as does any «small» State today (1). To believe that modern society could ever manage with less police or less prisons, or that one day everyone might work of their own free will, is an incredible delusion that has been refuted by reality a thousand times over. On the contrary, the more this society of exploitation and oppression progresses, the more indispensable direct mechanisms of repression and oppression become to maintain humanity as a labour force for capital.

Slavery was never wiped out, but merely disguised. Forced labour has been developed on the basis of other,

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(1) This is only an image, because even the "smallest" of today's States is no more than an expression of the impressive worldwide State.



more modern, mechanisms such as the generalisation of wage labour, but without abandoning forced labour itself. The big concentration camps organised by capital proved to have far greater potential than was ever developed by the mode of production exclusively based on slavery. Moreover, slavery itself (at the same time as wage labour) continues to be a reality in this world, in all its modernity, in numerous countries, including certain areas of the US (2) and in all prisons across the world.

The progress of capital is such that all prisons and every police force in the world are no longer sufficient

for its purposes. The more capital progresses, the more its opulence and misery grow, the more its wastefulness develops and even the most basic needs fail to be met... so the police, courts and prisons become more and more indispensable.

In this article we want to highlight some remarkable advances made more recently by capital and the State, which are clear confirmation of what capital holds in store for us - more repression and barbarity - because they represent appreciable progress in the usual mechanisms of repression.

## 1. Forced labour for prisoners reinstated in the USA. When will the castration of delinquents begin?

When the Clinton government came into office, it was announced that they had budgeted for the recruitment of another 100 000 policemen. This is the kind of news that should really shock humanity, yet merely produces resignation; after all, it is only one small news item in the torrent we are used to. When we state that in a country such as the USA (symbol of human rights and free enterprise) forced labour has been officially instituted and that they are planning to castrate sexual delinquents, we are likely to be accused of lying, fabrication and subversive provocation and told that such things no longer exist, that we are not in the Middle Ages. However, such information is becoming more and more prevalent.

For instance, according to the Ansa news agency: *«The state of Alabama has reestablished the use of chains for its prisoners, reintroducing a method that had not been used for over 30 years (only!!!) in the US. The new prison chief, Ron Jones, declared that "to see the prisoners in chains will make our young people think and will convince them that crime does not pay!"»*

Even before the television screens of the whole world had transmitted this sordid show of chained prisoners escorted by police and being submitted to forced labour, the Ansa agency had reported: *«During the coming weeks, 400 prisoners will be forced to work on the roads and fields outside the prison, and one will again witness the spectacle of prisoners being chained together five by five, just like in some old films.»*

In another state of the USA, during the same period (February-April 95), fierce argument was raging as to whether those who had committed «serious sexual crimes» should be castrated or not.

In an international telegram dated March 29th 1995, Ansa reported: *«A proposal to castrate those found guilty of serious sexual crimes provoked fervent debate even before becoming law in the state of Texas. The bill, approved by a large majority of the Senate of this state, offers such prisoners the choice between castration or prison.»*

Senator Royce West (Democrats) became indignant, describing it as barbarity: *«What will be the next step? To cut off thieves' hands?»* And «why not?» we ask. Are there not «other States» supported by these same capitalist factions that practise precisely such methods? Do not torturers and killers in the pay of the police across half of the planet receive instruction and training from the same police forces that the Democrats and Republicans applaud in the USA? And is the State that chops off hands in some parts of the world not the same, in the end, as the one that is planning to cut off balls in the US?

Let's listen to the arguments of the republicans in Texas. This is what the Republican Senator Teel Bivins had to say when referring to those who, according to his judgment, should be castrated: *«Such persons often fall victim of uncontrollable instincts, several have*

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(2) See the article in our central review in Spanish *Comunismo* No.7, June 1981: *"The capitalist mode of production is still developing slavery as one of its subsidiary forms today: an example of the USA"*.

asked for surgery voluntarily so as to put an end to their sexual appetite and start living a normal life at last.»

«A normal life» !!!? «A normal life» ???!!!

We sincerely hope that the proletariat will not delay in inflicting, in public, this kind of "normal life" on him!

But let's return to his argument. Mr.Bivins maintains that this new proposal will leave criminals the liberty to choose whether to be castrated or not: *«The decision to amputate the testicles will be totally voluntary.»* As always, behind freedom of choice, lies the stick; and in this case, moreover, blackmail. As far as the revolutionary proletariat is concerned, it will not stoop to the level of blackmailing the honourable Mr.Bivins, but will definitely not leave him the «right to choose»!

Mr. Bivins adds further that he has *«carefully evaluated studies on castration in certain European countries, which show that castration enormously reduces the chances of repeating sexual crimes.»*

It is important to realise that this bill has already been approved by the Senate, which shows to what



extent this way of reasoning and acting, more often attributed to the Middle Ages, is coming back into fashion, corresponding to **increasingly modern and necessary forms of State oppression**, not only to the barbarity of «Islamic States», as Western democrats are fond of repeating.

The Ansa news agency ends its report by commenting that for the bill to become law it has to be approved by the Texan Lower Chamber, and then signed by the Governor...

## 2. Science and genetics at the service of the police and state oppression

**O**n the 10th of april 1995, the international press announced that from that moment on, *«the British police will be equipped with the first operational genetic file in the world dedicated to fighting crime and capable of listing up to 5 million delinquants.»*

Even if this may be upsetting to many progressivists, we assert that this constitutes major progress for capital, for State control of life, an impressive development of the mechanisms of repression on which our enemies can count from now on.

*«The promoters of this project regard it to be the most revolutionary tool at the disposal of the police since the introduction of fingerprinting, nearly a century ago. (3) The Home Office has*

*welcomed this exciting development that puts Britain at the forefront of the struggle against crime.»*

*«The file... is located in Birmingham (centre of England) and its access is under strict security controls. It registers the DNA-code of people who have already been convicted or of those simply questioned during an investigation by analysing some saliva or a strand of hair.»*

*«Since last year, the law has allowed such genetic samples to be taken from all suspects, even without their agreement. The police's aim is to put 135 000 British men and women on file in the first year, mainly in cases of murder, sexual assault and violent robbery. Ultimately, 5 million*

(3) All these quotes in inverted commas come from European newspapers, dated 11-12 April 1995.



*files will be stored, ie. 10% of the British population. Sixty full-time police officers and scientists will be taken on to manage the files.»*

According to this news report, it will take only 7 days to compare the information in the file with any evidence found at the scene of a crime and to establish who's guilty (providing that person has already been put on file). The margin of error will be less than one in several million. The cost of such an operation, sample analysis and comparison with the file, will be extremely cheap, around 65 dollars.

Even the most appalling Orwellian predictions have become trivial compared to the progress of this marvellous world we live in. Here are two more examples of the progress made by the State in Great Britain.

- in the last few years, more than 1 million security cameras have been installed.

- on the 10th of April 1995, the same day that the genetic file became operational, a new provision of the penal code was approved, which scraps «... the sacred right to remain silent, which is supposed to have benefitted all those taken into custody. Henceforth, any refusal to answer police questions will be held against the accused during a future trial.»

During the same period, we realised, while reading Belgian newspapers, that the English State is not as much at the avant-garde of repression as we might have been led to believe. The newspaper *Le Soir* wrote: «*In Belgium, filing is also in full swing. After encoding fingerprints and photographs of suspects and detainees, genetic fingerprints are being entered into the National Institute of Criminology's (INC) computers. This is a slow and progressive process that is being carried out under the watchful eye of the December 1992 law concerning the protection of private life.*» All this comes complete with their guarantees for the protection of democratic rights!

*Le Soir* continues: «*This filing is authorised by a royal decree determining the INC's tasks. The computer system was installed recently and about a month and a half ago they started to encode the results of genetic reports provided by several official laboratories*» ...

*«The genetic fingerprints come from analysis of blood, sperm or human tissue samples (skin, hair...). These allow a genetic fingerprint to be determined specific to each individual and partially similar to one's parents. This technique often used in cases of murder or rape, when it is possible to find some sperm or blood originating from the presumed perpetrator. These samples will allow, by way of the file, to establish a link with other cases in which the accused's guilt has already been established. But only a magistrate -the director of the file- will be allowed access to make any link between a print and a person. (This is where they tell us that we don't need to worry, that we are protected by law!) This protection stems from the law of 8.12.92 on the protection of private life. This law authorises the constitution of files (the individual does not own the information concerning him and cannot oppose it) but imposes some restrictions on files allowing personal identification... Nevertheless, the law is more permissive where judicial or administrative police enquiries are concerned.» (This should come as no surprise to us!)*

And as if this wasn't enough, *Le Soir* also informs us that not only judges and police are interested in the files, but bosses as well: «*If genetics can be useful to judges, it could be that it will soon be exploited... by employers. Researchers from the School of the Sociology of Health at the Universite Libre de Bruxelles (ULB), have started a study polling bosses and unions in order to find out their opinion... Will bosses soon discard a CV if a perfect health certificate does not accompany it?*»

And we will still be told that it is not science itself that is bad, but the way it is used to oppress; that we shouldn't challenge genetics just because it is being used by the police. This point of view is common to all «progressivists», as much to the bourgeois right as to Stalinism, Trotskyism or more generally, the whole of social-democracy. This ideology is just a particular application of a much more general conception that considers productive forces to be neutral, at the service of either barbarity, or humanity, according to who is using them and how they are being used.

But what is forgotten in this conception, is that it is capital that conceives the productive forces; the rate of profit determines what science researches or produces. It is not the neutrality of research but the market that directs genetics or science; it is money that rules laboratories and «inspires» scientists, it is subsidy, and therefore the central State apparatus, that have the last word in what type of research is to be undertaken. And so the cycle is completed: not only does the police use science, but science itself is entirely conceived as an agent of the State, as a police department.

### 3. Neuroleptics against the Homeless

«When the slums revolt, bullets will not stop them.» This is a basic axiom of the politics of bourgeois domination. Velasco Alvaro, the ex-military president of Peru used this argument to explain to his colleagues the absolute necessity for his progressive coup d'état, and to argue that it is necessary to change many things in order to keep everything in its place.

And since bullets are not enough, they use other means: progress of course, but also the drug mafia, religious sects, new social services,... This is how, following the wave of struggle of 1989, they set up police stations and aid centres in different areas of Caracas to control the population, to detect and channel sources of rebellion and more generally, to get the population used to repression. In the same way, all over the world, children are put into files starting from school, even from nursery school. In these institutions, different kind of social assistants operate: it is their job to investigate and, in general, are efficient agents for prevention and policing on behalf of the State. Lately, we have learned that in different countries of Latin and non-Latin America (and we presume that it is the same on other continents), humanitarian organisations, always so preoccupied with health problems, are freely distributing Valium and other diazepam-derived hypnotics in the hospitals they set up or run. Even worse, in certain shanty-towns more than half the population are dependent upon these hard drugs... and comrades who live in these areas consider this to be one of the main causes for the general mood of passivity.

But one cannot stop progress! All of this is no longer sufficient. In the US they are preparing a law to make the use of neuroleptics (4) compulsory for the "homeless".

In concrete terms, Senator Nancy Kassebaum, elected by the State of Kansas and president of the Labour and Human Resources Committee, has worked out a draft law that, according to David Oaks (5), proposes «to apply the status of IOC ("Involuntary Outpatient Commitment") to the homeless». This report explains that the IOC are patients allowed to leave psychiatric hospital on the condition that they attend on a regular basis to be given injections of neuroleptics that keep them permanently drugged.

*«I.O.C now exists in more than half of the U.S. States. It usually amounts to this: people living out of their community, not at that time violating any law or hurting anyone, must report regularly to their community mental health facility for injections of long-acting neuroleptic drugs, such as Haldol or Proxilin. They can be locked up simply for refusing this chemical. The effect of this "depot injection" in the butt lasts weeks! ... When your name comes up on the computer, and you didn't report for your injection, sometimes a "mobile aggressive treatment team" is sent out to find you and inject you on the spot. These goon squads are known by some on the streets as "needles on wheels".....Pharmaceutical fundamentalists have embarked on a chemical crusade to forcibly inject us -especially homeless Americans- with powerful neurotoxins, sometimes for life, wasting taxpayer millions to create dependent people... our country is on the brink of accepting a Brave New World "final solution" to poverty.»*

The same organisation DENDRITE denounces a collection of «side effects» of such drugs:

(4) For several decades tranquillisers have been divided into two groups:

a/ Anxiolytic agents or "minor" tranquillisers, subdivided into barbiturates, benzodiazepines and others (chloral hydrate, meprobamate...).

b/ Anti-psychotic, neuroleptic or "major" tranquillisers which are subdivided into phenothiazines (piperazines), butyrophenones, diphenylbutylpiperidines, thioxanthenes and substituted bezamides...

Note that the classification between "major" and "minor" tranquillisers cannot be all that clear, because these terms are put in inverted commas even in scientific books on the subject.

(5) The information that we publish here, comes from the CHRP-internet - David Oaks, 18th July 1995, address: <chrp@efn.org> that also produces information on a group called Dendrite ("No forced drugging of homeless people"). Their address is as follows: dendrite@efn.org.



a/ Neuroleptics can kill because one of their main effects is to prevent the loss of body heat. This could partly explain «deaths due to the heat» as reported in the press. Recently, during each heat wave, hospitals have been full and many people have died, with the heat being the only explanation given! The main reason is clearly related to pollution which, in the absence of rain and wind, combined with high CO2 emissions, produces a high concentration of ozone detrimental, in particular, to those with respiratory problems (asthma, allergies,...).  
(6)

But it is clear that the use of neuroleptics is an additional lethal factor hidden amongst the figures of those who die because of the «heat»! (Do they really think we will believe this bullshit?). Referring to the last heatwave, David Oaks said:

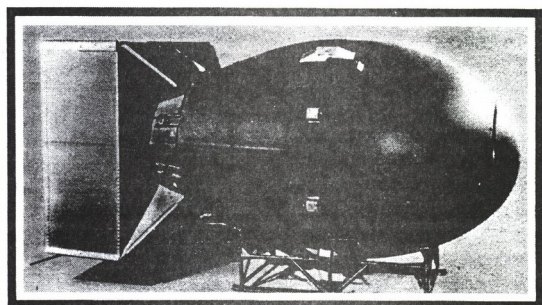
*«The following item was in today's newspaper, 19th July 1995, via the Associated Press of Chicago, concerning the heatwave just experienced by much of the USA: "In Milwaukee, officials said the heatwave caused or contributed to 60 deaths. Among them were about 18 people who were taking anti-psychotic drugs which block the body's ability to release heat, said Medical Expert Jeffrey Jentzen. "Before seeing this, just yesterday, I had posted some letters giving seven arguments against forced "outpatient" psychiatric drugging (Involuntary Outpatient Commitment or I.O.C.). The first argument I gave was that during heatwaves, forced neuroleptics can kill..."»*

b/ *«...neuroleptics can also kill and damage in many other ways... such as heart attacks, brain damage in long-term users, including measurable brain shrinkage.»*

c/ *It has been proven that «long-term use of neuroleptics can induce a permanent "rebound effect"... neuroleptics can produce more of the distress the drugs are meant to suppress.»*

d/ *Certain associations of «"Survivors" of forced neuroleptic treatment call it "torture"... those who do not want to take neuroleptics often describe the drug as feeling like a lobotomy... the areas affected in the brain are the frontal lobes, as is the case in lobotomy.»*

What we have exposed here are just a few **examples** of the present development of mechanisms of repression. News of this kind emerges on a daily basis. We heard recently that, from now on, begging will be banned in some French towns as well as in Brussels, the capital of Europe, and all beggars will be expelled; in Europe's psychiatric hospitals, staff are being replaced by cameras; in France, under the pretext of anti-terrorism, bags, parcels etc, can be searched at any time on buses and in the underground. «Big Brother», and all the macabre system Orwell described in his novel «1984» look pathetic compared to reality. **In any case, this is the best world that capitalism's progress and its State has to offer us.** Yet these examples relate to what they call «peacetime»... in other periods, it is far worse!



«Fat Man» atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki: a step in capitalist progress!

(6) The situation has reached such a worrying stage in Europe that, on several occasions during recent summers, the authorities have advised against physical exertion outdoors and have limited traffic in certain towns as the levels of ozone considered to be breathable have been way surpassed.

## Social-democracy's eternal euroracist pacifism

(the Mexican version of the ICC)

**W**e cannot respond to every provocation, insult and slander aimed at our comrades throughout the world by organisations such as ICC, but there are excesses and methods that we are forced to denounce as being against the proletariat.

The ICC has never split from social-democratic and pacifist conceptions, nor ceased to assert its europeist and euroracist conception of the world. In concrete terms, it specializes in denigrating proletarian struggles in the Middle-East (1), America, Africa, whilst vindicating many strikes and pacifist demonstrations (usually trade unionist) that take place in Western Europe, especially in France (2).

Wherever the place, the ICC always knows which side to choose. In Europe, it opposes every attempt at class rupture and denounces all violent action by the proletariat, labelling it as provocation. Everywhere else, armed with this good old eurocentrist social-democratic ideology, it denies the class character of the revolutionary social movement, as well as the class groups defending it.



Not long ago, comrades of the «Collectif Pour la

Défense du Communisme» (Collective for the Defence of Communism) sent us a denunciation of the social-democratic and «lambertist» character of the ICC («social-democratic shit»), along with the quotations upon which they based their statements, taken from the periodical published by the ICC in France. In it, the ICC labels all those who went on to direct action in the struggle of March 1994 as being **agents provocateurs in the police's pay**. We present here some howlers made by these lackeys of the bourgeois State, selected by comrades of the CDC. They take on their full relevance when it is taken into account that the violent actions denounced by the ICC were rare exceptions, counter-current to the general atmosphere of social peace reigning in France at that time.

*«It is obvious that the first brawls, if not directly fomented by the police, were widely furthered by them...»*

*«Furthermore, these provocations were a good way for the bourgeoisie to seek to intimidate the workers by the deployment of its repressive arsenal, to make them believe that they had no way of imposing a balance of power to their own advantage in the face of the State...»*

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(1) The ICC didn't feel the slightest bit ashamed to state that «the working class is a minority in Iraq... and possesses almost no historical experience of combat against capital»... at the very moment that workers' insurrection broke out there!

(2) During the recent movement of struggle in November/December '95, the ICC suddenly took an opposite course to this position (without departing from its everlasting attitude of truncating reality to make it conform to their own positions). So, without, of course, ever referring to the few violent ruptures expressed in this movement, the working class (as seen by the ICC), up until yesterday guardian of class consciousness, suddenly became a simple mass of trade union manoeuvres, incapable of affirming its class interests. This reversed unilateral position probably resulted from an nth modification of its biased ideology, decided during an nth general congress. Disgusting egocentrism!



«As for the "explosive actions" based on terrorism, not only have they nothing to do with the proletarian struggle, but they feature increasingly in the methods used by the bourgeoisie to perpetuate its class terror. At best, they represent desperate reactions of the rebellious petite bourgeoisie without a future and, at worse (in most cases), actions by small groups manipulated by the State and its secret services...»

Note that this is exactly the same argument used by social-democracy against proletarian groups all over the world, identical to that used by opportunists and reformists against all those who won the revolutionary autonomy of the proletariat on the streets in 1917-23. Those who opt for direct action and do not accept social peace are accused of serving the enemy and giving the bourgeoisie a pretext to harden State terror. As if repression ever needed a pretext!



In *Revolucion Mundial* No.21, the Mexican version of the ICC dedicates a text of insults and slander to us entitled «The ICG and its support for the 'Zapatist movement'», one step further towards the relinquishment of proletarian positions».

As we said previously, we cannot stop at each falsification and every lie, but will denounce the general method of falsification. As an example, throughout the whole of their article the writers make out that they are quoting from our texts by putting half-sentences in quotation marks when, in reality, **they are constructions of the ICC's mind**, which bear no relation to our assertions.

Starting with the title itself: «*The ICG and its support for the 'Zapatist movement'*». Our group has never supported any «Zapatist movement» but rather the movement of the **proletariat** against the bourgeoisie in Mexico.

Another example: «*There is its 'critical' support for*

The comrades of the Collectif conclude that «*a time will come when those who write such things will have to take cover*»... and they are right!

Let's remember that these are the same social-democratic arguments used by Domingo Arango and others such as Abad de Santillan against the violent actions of revolutionary militants such as Di Giovanni or Rocigna in Argentina in the 20's. This sort of slander, **its usefulness for the State very real in this instance**, led to Domingo Arango receiving a bullet in the head, and we can only lament that Abad de Santillan did not share the same fate. He went on, in Spain in '36-'37, to play a leading role in the liquidation and republican disarmament of the proletariat following its triumph in the insurrection.



*Shining Path in Peru*». Here, in addition to a perfect falsification, we find a true **collaboration with the policy of amalgam carried out by the police**. We have never formulated any critical or non-critical support for Shining Path. We globally denounced the group as a danger to the autonomy of the proletariat in the region. Furthermore, we consider its positions on the peasants' war and the fight for democracy to be counterrevolutionary and doomed to deadlock. What we have done, and will continue to do, is support the struggle of the proletariat in Peru, including the struggle of proletarian prisoners, even if some, or even a large number of them, carry the flag of Shining Path.

And while this bunch of bastards that constitute the ICC were declaring that there were no proletarian «political prisoners» in Latin America, we were fighting to free imprisoned proletarians. The ICC remained indifferent -and therefore became accomplices- to the huge massacre of proletarian prisoners orchestrated by social democracy in Peru, under the pretext that they belonged to one or other organization, whilst our group

openly defined itself as being on the side of the prisoners and called for the denunciation of the massacre and for international proletarian struggle (3). In reality, for the ICC as for the bourgeois State, and in particular for the Peruvian police, to stand on the side of the oppressed is to support Shining Path. That is infact the basis of the whole police strategy in Peru, which consists of repressing anybody by accusing him or her of collaborating with or supporting Shining Path. It's precisely on the basis of this amalgam that many comrades (internationalist or self-defined anarchist) are repressed. As we said at the time:

*«Anyway, we believe that to fail to show solidarity with those repressed, on the pretext that they are Stalinists, Maoists or other, is to become accomplices of the State and the whole international press which identifies Shining Path and its ideology with the proletariat crushed in blood in Peru today.»*

But clearly taking sides with the proletariat by confronting and denouncing State terrorism has nothing to do with the critical support of this or that formal organization, in the same way that, for example, support for the proletarian revolution in Russia must not be amalgamated with support for the policies of the formal Bolshevik organization. Moreover, the latter did not demarcate itself from the terrain of left-wing social-democracy, which is why it oscillated between insurrection and support for democratic bourgeois government, between direct action and parliamentarism, between confrontation with Capital and the economic policies for its development (strengthening of «State capitalism», taylorism, NEP,...). In the workers' camp, we have always considered those who contribute to this type of police amalgam to be cops and informers, including those who «confuse» determined direct action against the State with whichever formal organization that is in hiding and being hounded by the police. As can be seen from the example of the policies of the State in Italy over recent years, this policy of amalgam is fundamental to State repression.

Throughout ICC's article the passages in quotations marks are supposed to constitute statements made by our group, **but are actually nothing but lies and slander**. Thus, we learn that the ICG presents itself as the «continuator of the Bordigist tradition» (ICC's quotations marks!). If you were to read the thousands of pages we have written in all our published languages, you would never come across any such absurdity. This is pure ideology from the ICC. Neither our group, nor Bilan, nor Prometeo,... have ever presented themselves

as Bordigists and even less as continuators of the Bordiguist tradition. The same applies when they quote us as calling for the «Mexican revolution» or that we consider that «the movement of Emiliano Zapata was influenced by the proletariat». The ICC is just spouting loads of bullshit whose only basis is its own social-democratic ideology which makes a distinction between the «peasants» and the «proletariat»; this has definitely nothing to do with our positions.

What is important in all this is not to denounce particular insults aimed at us, but to disclose the methods used by the counterrevolution: inaccurate quotations, falsifications, amalgams.... As if it were a trial, the aim is to discredit us and, if possible, hand us over to the cops.



What lies behind all these dirty tricks, this jealous policy of lies and slander? Disparagement and falsification of the struggle of our class.... We quote, word for word:

*«What are the "majority of the proletariat in arms"? A handful of peasants whose desperate misery served the purposes of the organizers of this movement» ... «a few peasants who dream of a kind of autonomy for ethnic groups, who do not look for the abolition of private property, but for the "restitution of land"... in fact, their aim doesn't go further than the established order, they long for nothing else but to "make exploitation more humane and fair"»*

Note that they haven't recovered from their mania of putting statements of their own in quotation marks and attributing them to their opponents (the proletarians in Mexico). Note particularly the vulgar manoeuvre in which they put the words «make exploitation more human and fair» in quotation marks, as if their contradictors had actually declared a such thing, thus disparaging the struggle of the proletariat by inventing sentences that only they assert!

As is commonplace in social-democracy, they discredit the proletariat, try to divide it, label proletarians as peasants simply because they live in the countryside and, similarly, if they live in towns, try to dissolve them into townsmen, citizens. Indeed, the ICC knows as well as everybody that this is not a question of the «small-holding (Parzellen) peasants» referred to by Marx in «The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte», not a question of small landowners but, on the contrary, of agricultural workers dispossessed of everything (4).

(3) On this topic, see our article «Large-scale massacre of prisoners in Peru» in *Communism* No.6.



proletarians who have nothing to sell but their labour force and whose only possessions are their «proles» (that is to say, their descendants) and whom, as such, **are objectively opposed to the world of private property.** In our opinion, this opposition does not arise from any particular idea, expression or ideological declaration but, on the contrary, from the life of the proletarians itself, from their total deprivation of the means of survival, from the only class whose social and material existence opposes private ownership of the means of life (and production). Attributing any objectives other than social revolution to proletarians (whether agricultural or not) is purely and simply **taking sides with the counterrevolution, just as social-democracy has always done.**

By attributing different interests from the rest of the proletariat to those who are dying of starvation, the ICC are making the same assertions that have always been made by the counter-revolution. Whilst the Maderos, the Carranzas,... social-democracy, the ICC in Mexico and the EZLN have designated reform and the defence of private property as being the aim of the agricultural proletariat in that country, revolutionaries of the past and of always, from Zalacosta to Julio Chavez Lopez, from Librado Rivera to Flores Magon... to the revolutionaries of today have their objectives firmly set on the **abolition of private property and the destruction of the State.**



But there is more. In accordance with its social-democratic line, the ICC goes further; it was not enough for them to denigrate the struggle of the proletariat today and they have gone on to assert that the struggle of the proletariat between 1910 and 1920 was not a proletarian struggle either. Yes, however incredible it may seem,

the ICC does not grant even the tiniest certificate of proletarian struggle to this **gigantic revolutionary wave of proletariat against bourgeoisie in Mexico which marked the beginning of the whole worldwide wave of struggles.** Even worse, it asserts that it was a struggle between imperialist forces. We quote word for word (translated into English):

*«The war in Mexico from 1910 to 1920 was not in the first instance a proletarian revolution. The young and dispersed industrial proletariat (5) did not constitute a decisive force during the war. In fact, its most important attempts at rebellion, the wave of strikes at the beginning of the century, had been completely crushed on the eve of war. In as far as certain proletarian sectors did participate in the war, they did so as carriages pulled along behind bourgeois fractions. As for the agricultural proletariat, without his industrial brother as a guide and still very attached to the land, he remained very integrated in peasant war... But what is called the 'Mexican revolution' has not exhausted its content in internal social conflict. It also remains fully within the framework of the imperialist conflicts which shook the world at the beginning of the century and which led on to the First World War... and to a change in the hegemony of the major powers.»*  
(6)

As soon as the proletariat goes from a wave of strikes to armed struggle, severs the bourgeoisie's head and expropriates, social-democracy can no longer hide its repugnance and refuses to grant it the certificate of proletarian struggle, accusing it of being «terrorist» etc.

In our eyes it is normal that the ICC does not

(4) Besides, on the American continent, where capitalism was despotically imposed by the conquest and where feudalism never existed, the «small-holding peasants», the petit bourgeois, never existed as a force and never played an important role. In North, South and Central America the class polarisation (bourgeoisie/proletariat) has always been the unique reality. The large masses in the countryside do not possess any property (and when, exceptionally, they own property on a legally formal basis, it is only a trick, any real economic property remaining absent). They are part of the **proletariat** in the sense that revolutionaries have always given to this word. The search for «small-holding peasants» by sociologists and bourgeois left-wing militants in America clearly shows their cultural alienation, making them apply the European model of passing «from feudalism to capitalism» in a mechanical way. It is not by chance that those who talk about the existence of peasants in America also talk about feudal society or feudal reminiscence and the need for bourgeois democratic revolution.

(5) We do not want to enter into comparisons between countries, as this is not our terrain but, given that it constitutes the basis of the whole ideology of the ICC (see their emphasis on this question in what follows) we will at least say that this description is completely wrong. The «industrial» sector of the proletariat in Mexico in the last century is comparable in terms of quantity and concentration with that of continental Europe in the same period and, more important, in terms of struggle, associationism, strikes (since 1850 in Tarel, Guadalajara), programmes, communist organisations (the first Communist Party that we know by this name was founded in Mexico in 1878) was one of the most precocious sectors of the proletariat in the world. Put simply, arguments of the supposed weakness of the proletariat have always been used by the counter-revolution.

(6) Quotation taken from *Revue Internationale* No.77, published in France by ICC and also used by the Mexican ICC.

recognise the revolutionary character of the proletariat's struggle and we have nothing more to add to the basis of this question. We will leave it to the texts we have presented, and continue to present, on revolution and counter-revolution in Mexico. Eighty years ago, the comrade Flores Magon replied to these **same slanders**, putting their authors in the place they deserved. At that time, social-democracy and the sectors of social-democratic «anarchism» (such as Grave or Galleani) also denied the proletarian, the communist character of these struggles; but in this period also, **the barricade only had two sides: either the side of the proletariat and its struggle or against it.**

*«Who are those who doubt that there is a revolutionary movement in Mexico, and that this movement has the immediate aim, not to bring a new president into power, but to appropriate the land and the machinery of production?»*

*Just a few rascals who by their silence or their attacks, help the bourgeoisie and authority, taking the moral and material force away from those who rose up in arms brandishing the Red Flag of the worldwide proletariat.»*

Ricardo Flores Magon  
in «Class War»  
Regeneracion, 6th April 1912

As for the reactionary invention which consists of saying that this struggle was within the framework of

imperialist war, we can only add that only **those who confuse revolution with counter-revolution** could make such an assertion, because it was only when the counter-revolution had triumphed, when the extraordinary revolutionary movement of our comrades had been liquidated, that the proletariat was transformed into cannon fodder for the interbourgeois war. And this is not particular to Mexico. In all other major revolutionary attempts of this century, as in Russia, Germany or, later still in Spain, it was only once counter-revolution had triumphed (whether under the flag of the revolution or not) that they managed to mobilise the workers as the people and make cannon fodder out of them for the various bourgeois fractions who were fighting over the leadership of the State, culminating in the gigantic imperialist butchery which public opinion and its ideological defenders still insist on calling the «second world war».

Over and above the denunciation of this social-democratic organisation, what interests us is to expose the methodology, the essence of the reasoning behind it.

As was exposed by Marx and the comrade Flores Magon (see our revue in Spanish, *Comunismo* No.35), proletarian revolt is born from the needs of the proletariat. In the same way, the socialist and communist content of its struggle lies within its very life, within its opposition, which is international and, as it were, pre-conscious of capital. Formal communist, revolutionary programmes do not emanate from any particular individual, but are contained within this





reality. This does not in any way signify a denial of the importance of clarifying the movement and therefore organisational, conscious and disciplined action, the party's revolutionary action, in the struggle for communist society.

For social-democracy it is quite the opposite. As was developed by Kautsky, Lenin and many others, the workers do not fight for their historical interests, but exclusively for their immediate ones. According to them, socialism, or the ideas of socialism, must come from outside the class.

Here follows the famous explanation by Kautsky on the socialist consciousness which comes from the exterior:

*«...But socialism and the class struggle arise in parallel and do not engender each other: they arise from different premises. Today's socialist consciousness can only arise on the basis of deep scientific knowledge. In fact, contemporary economic science is as much a condition of socialist production as is, for example, modern technology and, despite all its wishes, the proletariat cannot create either one or the other: both of them arise out of the contemporary social process. Thus, the bearer of science is not the proletariat, but **bourgeois intellectuals** (underlined by Karl Kautsky): contemporary socialism was, in effect, born from the brains of certain individuals of that category and was communicated by them to the most intellectually evolved proletarians, who went on to introduce it into the class struggle of the proletariat where conditions allowed it. In this way, therefore, socialist consciousness is an element imported from the outside (von Aussen Hineingetragen) into the class struggle of the proletariat and not something that arises spontaneously. Also the old programme of Heinfeld said very rightly that the task of social-democracy is to introduce into the proletariat (literally: to fill the proletariat up with) the consciousness of its situation and the consciousness of its mission.»*

This thesis is taken up by Kautsky's disciple Lenin, who brings this ideology to its maximum expression in *«What is to be done?»*

*«Social-democratic consciousness... could only come from the outside. The history of all countries testifies that, by its own forces alone, the working class can only reach trade-unionist consciousness... As for socialist doctrine, this was born from philosophical, historical, economic*

*theories elaborated by representatives instructed by the owning classes, by intellectuals.»*

Social-democracy, in the Mexican version of the ICC, goes even further than this in this negation of the proletariat, its struggle, its objectives, its consciousness. It adds all of its europeist racist ideology to its basic Kautskist conception. For the ICC, socialism not only comes from the outside of the proletariat, the outside of Mexico but, worse still, it stems directly from the contributions of the white European race. On page 16 of the Mexican review that we have been commenting on, in an article on unions in Mexico, we found the following gem.

*«Strikes were extremely rare before 1870, starting to generalise from that decade onwards. This transformation was not a 'spontaneous' acquisition of the proletariat that was born in Mexico; on the contrary, it was the result of the influence of organisations which were developing in Europe.»*

That is to say, according to the ICC, not even the generalisation of strikes (the need for which is felt during every strike) could arise in the struggle of the Mexican proletariat. The poor Mexican workers are not even credited with a brain to manage that... probably because they are Indians, because they do not belong to the European white race!

The Mexican version of the ICC explains it like this:

*«In general, there was less knowledge about the development of socialism in Mexico than in many other Latin American countries. It emanated, almost in its entirety from the activities and writings of a few workers and immigrant intellectuals; Nevertheless, immigration did not play such a substantial role in the formation of the proletariat in Mexico. In 1910 foreigners made up 59.4% in Argentina, 32.2% in Brasil, whilst in Mexico they only reached 0.77%, of those only 4.2% being workers. Added to this is the immaturity of the proletariat in Mexico which saw to it that those who reappropriated the organisational experiences of the European proletariat were rich artisans.»*

This is the ICC's version of the Kautsko-leninist theory of consciousness coming from the outside: **for them, it doesn't just come from outside the class, but from outside the country and is clearly a creation of the European white race.**

This is not just a negation of the fundamental basis of materialist historical determinism, but much more

globally communism as a universal being, a human community in historical opposition to the community of commodities and money. The historical arc of communism is ignored, the centuries and centuries of struggle by exploited against exploiters, the struggle of the human race against property, against value in process,... and to put the icing on the cake, communism is reduced to an ideology particularly invented in Europe. One can therefore see perfectly, even if it is sometimes possible to think the opposite, that social-democracy does not go beyond the judeo-christian conception of the world.

So let's leave Kautsky's modern emulators here. We have no more space to mention dozens of examples of practical, historical ways in which the proletariat in Mexico, in its own struggle, opposed bourgeois society and asserted its revolutionary, communist character, not only since 1910, but well before. In any case, our class's

revolutionary struggle has never waited for the ICC to come with its ideological wild imaginings in order to develop. Our class has no need to undertake theoretical investigations, to import ideas to fight for its needs, for communist revolution and to finish off its enemies.

As Marx said in *«The Class Struggles in France»*:

***«As soon as it has risen up, a class in which the revolutionary interests of society are concentrated finds the content and the material for its revolutionary activity directly in its own situation: foes to be laid low, measures dictated by the needs of the struggle to be taken; the consequences of its own deeds to drive it on. It makes no theoretical inquiries into its own task.»***

***«The State will never discover the source of social evil in the «state and organization of society» as the Prussian expects of his King. Wherever there are political parties each party will attribute every defect of society to the fact that its rival is at the helm of the state instead of itself. Even the radical and revolutionary politicians look for the causes of evil not in the nature of the state but in a specific form of the state which they would like to replace with another form of the state.»***

K. Marx, «Critical notes on «The king of Prussia and Social Reform»», 1844



# Italy : The repression is reinforced!

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**I**n this article, we want to highlight the new step taken by the State in Italy in its repression of groups of proletarian militants. We denounce the action of the State and want to show solidarity with comrades hit by this repression. We also call for struggle and solidarity against this recent warlike aggression by worldwide State terrorism.

Italy, major laboratory of counterrevolution, model of repression, international «example» of the technique of amalgam, factory of repentant and dissociated people, of collaborators... has made a further qualitative step.

A few years ago, the State in Italy came to the forefront of the international scene through its profound exploitation of the tactic of amalgam. In short, this consisted of lumping together and denouncing as terrorists whole sectors of the proletarian movement, which could not otherwise be officially accused of any specific offence. This repressive stroke of inspiration consisted of making bombs, which were then placed by the State's own police force (or sectors manipulated by it) in order to produce fear amongst the population and legitimize the State's terrorist action. The State in Italy has been combining terrorist action characteristic of any State (mostly physical and psychological torture) with legislation favouring denouncement, informing, collaboration, etc... for over fifteen years; little by little, this practice has become an international legal model used as an example by the police and legal forces of an ever-increasing number of countries.

Today, on the basis of vague statements made by a repentant (1) and following some raids in which some weapons were discovered and an «anarchist» charged, the State investigators, represented by the roman judge Antonio Marini, have launched a campaign against different groups and militants calling themselves «anarchist» and are accusing them of forming an «armed gang». It is clear that the cops are not looking for any culprit in particular, but want to declare illegal the whole, very contradictory movement articulated around different structures and positions, whose only point in common is that they call themselves «anarchist» (2).

It is clear that this kind of attack is not really directed against «anarchists» in general, given that some of them defend, in Italy just as elsewhere, clearly reformist and pacifist politics, providing an excellent service to the State. Moreover, as in the past, the State's tactic aims to put pressure on the different sectors it has amalgamated, so that they try to dissociate and exonerate themselves, etc., this course of action having been shown to produce excellent results. The proof of this can be seen from the time of the «Red Brigades» or «Prima Linea», when such pressure provoked a stream of declarations of dissociation. Certain sectors of official anarchism such as the «Circolo Berneri» or the «Italian Anarchist Federation», didn't hesitate to openly dissociate themselves from the accused, by way of communiques in which they declared that those charged had nothing to do with anarchists, are provocateurs and that anarchists would never carry out armed action.

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(1) Namsetchi Modjeh is the name of the repentant girl whose declarations, stuffed full of flagrant and proven lies, make up the basis upon which a whole movement is accused.

(2) One of the militants arrested is Alfredo M. Bonano. He is accused of being «the brains of an underground armed gang». Beyond the political divergencies he may have with our positions, this comrade has produced excellent material (a denunciation of amnesty in Italy, for instance) and has republished and distributed a collection of historical texts by communists (the so-called «international communist Left») via the publishing house «Anarchismo Editions».

Agents of repression generally leave official «anarchists» alone, trying to identify and strike hard at those whom they consider to be the real enemies of the State. But, as judges and cops are unable to consider subversion as a «natural» and inevitable product of misery and oppression, limiting their imagination to a group of conspirators, numerous mistakes are made which lead to the sentencing of militants or of whole sectors that are not even developing any revolutionary activity (and vice-versa).

From the end of 1995, and throughout 1996, a whole series of trials, raids, arrests, prosecutions, amalgams, statements, campaigns,... followed one after the other, climaxing on 17th September 1996 in a raid on some 60 houses and apartments in different towns in Italy and the arrest of dozens of militants, pushing even more militants into hiding in its wake. Some of the arrested militants have been accused of murder and bank robberies, but the great majority are accused, with no evidence, of belonging to the same «armed gang» (an organisation supposedly called «*Organizzazione Rivoluzionaria Anarchista Insurrezionalista*») and charged with: **being an «armed gang», having «subversive associations», «possessing weapons and explosives» and committing «crimes against public utilities».**

The reason why we are highlighting this amalgam of militants against which there is no proof of armed action or use of arms is not because we want to show solidarity with «innocents», as opposed to those who have carried out armed actions against private property and the State. This is the line always taken by reformist and opportunist political organisations. We consider that the «guilty» will always be an integral part of our movement, just as revolutionaries at the time of Marx and Bakunin or Flores Magon and Rodolfo Gonzáles Pacheco always claimed. The reason why we are drawing attention to amalgam is because we think it is fundamental to denounce the fact that the State not only wants to repress those who committed whatever «crime», but actually all those who represent any kind of danger to the State, whether or not they have done anything illegal and whether or not they fit their criteria for charges to be made against them. In short, it is essential to denounce the State's tactic of amalgam (the creation of informers, collaborators,...) as a method of repression of an extremely wide social movement, a method that aims to ensure and reproduce class domination. Let us add that the accused have formally denied belonging any such clandestine organisation. They explain that, ideologically, an «*anarchist revolutionary organisation for insurrection*», as a separate and specific structure, would be a nonsense for anyone calling himself «anarchist» and that the very

concept of such a thing would actually be that of a leninist organisation and thus contrary to their positions:

*«Judges know perfectly well that the anarchist organisation they talk about does not exist. They know that the model of an armed gang - a mirror image of their own model - cannot be applied to the real relationships between anarchists. Individuals who meet on the basis of affinity, ie. according to their own differences, and develop initiatives without formalising any particular points of unity, individuals who do organise, it's true, but never in a rigid manner, cannot be an armed gang. This is not only because they refuse clandestinity (a refusal that is of significance in itself), but because they cannot accept to enrol - neither as a name nor as a programme - in a structure that makes armed encounters a reality separated from the subversive totality. And if an anarchist, individually and assuming all his responsibilities, decides to use weapons, nothing of this reality is changed. Even if, letting our imagination run riot, all the accused or even every anarchist in the world, in addition to writing, discussing, making love, circulating leaflets, insulting bosses, deserting work, occupying buildings and recuperating commodities were to use weapons, it still would not make them an armed gang. Those in power need to invent the gang... The judges want to impose the illusion that, apart from survival and waiting, there is only armed organisation... Happily, insurrection is not really what the repressive organs want it to be...»*

Here are some addresses to obtain information about the victims of repression or to improve the solidarity network with them:

**CANENERO**  
**Casella Postale 4120**  
**50135 Firenze**  
**ITALIA**  
**Teléfono y Fax: 055/631413**

**El Paso Ocupato**  
**via Passo Buole 47**  
**10127 Torino**  
**ITALIA**  
**E-mail: elpasosq@freenet.hut.fi**  
**Tel: 011-317.41.07**

**Solidaritätskomitee Italien**  
**c/o Infoladen**  
**Breisacherstr. 12**  
**81667 Munich**  
**GERMANY**



# What reduction of working time?

The following text was first published in Communism No.2 in 1985. At that time we were faced with language difficulties that made our texts in English quite obscure for our readers. Now, thanks to the effort of more and more English-speaking comrades, the texts published in Communism are far easier to read. This is one reason why we are republishing this text. Another more important reason is that fighting to reduce working time is a moment of the revolutionary struggle against work. In 1985, we wanted to denounce the ideology of trade-unions and Leftists; at the end of the 90's, this denunciation is just as valid. There is continual talk about reducing working time: left and right, Labour and Tories, «CP», Trotskyists, Maoists, nationalists, fascists,... it has become a universal recipe for unemployment, the solution to capitalist crisis.

One of the bourgeoisie's strengths is its presentation of the reforms necessary for the accumulation of capital as working class conquests, as is the case with the so-called 'reduction in working time', preached by unions and left-wing parties throughout the world.

In their continuous search for extraordinary surplus value, capitalists are obliged to constantly update and modernise their means of production in order to increase productivity. Increases in productivity result, above all, from an ever more continuous, methodical and intense use of productive forces, the most important of which is labour power. As capital changes its methods of work, it also transforms labour power and men themselves, since it changes the relation of men to work. For proletarians, this always means an increase in the rate of exploitation; first, because wages do not depend upon the production of wealth and second, because any growth in productivity implies an increase in the intensity of work. Under capital, the installation of new machines always gives rise to an accentuation of the division of work, to the more rigorous, more scientific

and more rational organisation of working time, submitting proletarians to stricter rules, regulations and obligations. This is the hunt for 'dead time', the struggle against absenteeism, the development of mobility of the workforce, continuous surveillance, stepping up the pace...

Faced with this perpetual reinforcement of exploitation, one of the working class's constant demands has been, and still is, the reduction in working time. The bourgeoisie is therefore trying to identify this proletarian demand with a *«legal limit on the working day»* (without which social labour could not be intensified and rendered more productive of surplus-value) in order to make the *«workers' movement»* the linchpin of reformism, of capital's permanent reform.

The *«legal reduction in working time»* has nothing to do with a reappropriation of time by the workers and is just a formal reduction in working time, only measured quantitatively by the chronometer without any regard for its quality (intensity, density). This measure, far from being a step towards the emancipation of the

proletariat, only aims to adapt the labour power, the living labour, to the new conditions of exploitation, to make them accept the increasing dependence of the worker on capitalist machines, to reinforce the division and programming of their lives according to the needs of capitalist production, making them, at work as in their leisure time, simple reproducers of surplus-value.

The reduction in working time as an expression of the proletariat's emancipation from its secular enslavement to work can only be real in the context of intense struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie, in which the class imposes its demands, antagonistic to the capitalist mode of production, by force.

It is therefore necessary to distinguish between increase in productivity and intensification of work. Under capital, both concepts are closely linked because productivity cannot be increased without reinforcing the intensity of work and the exploitation of the proletariat. Under proletarian dictatorship, however, any increase in productivity will lessen the intensity of work and reduce the exploitation of the proletariat. Communism, because it responds to human needs rather than the need to accumulate capital, because it will free the development of productive forces from the shackles of the capitalist production relationship, will achieve (for example by generalised automation) a far greater productivity at the same time as abolishing all work.

## The constant increase in surplus-labour

Whereas the serf, for example, worked half the time on his own land and the other half on his lord's, which made his exploitation obvious, the wage labourer receives a salary for his whole day of work, which then appears to have been paid in full. The exploitation of free labour is hidden by the abstract character of work, creator of value, object of a wage payment:

*«The private works of isolated individuals do not acquire the character of social labour in the concrete form in which they were used in the process of production, but can only acquire it through exchange, which represents an abstraction of particular objects and of specific forms of work.»*

(I.I. Rubin, Essays on Marx's Theory of Value)

In the capitalist mode of production, all commodities (including labour power) must be made equal, reduced to a common denominator, in order to be able to be exchanged: value or abstract work, whose measure is the social working time crystallized within it necessary for their reproduction. Every commodity is therefore sold at its value (the law of supply and demand making the prices oscillate around this average). So, the worker sells his labour power by the day while, for example, one hour of work would be enough to produce the value necessary to reproduce his own force. By working one hour a day, the worker would have produced enough wealth to exchange for his means of subsistence (food, clothes, lodging...) The wage is the payment for this necessary work, without which the proletarian would

not be able to maintain nor reproduce himself. So, by paying the labour power at its value, the capitalist can appropriate the work done during the remaining hours of the day without owing anything to the proletarian, since the contract and the principle that each merchandise is bought at its value have been respected. We call this part of the work which is appropriated by the bourgeoisie surplus-labour. The value created during this surplus-labour is called surplus-value. The relation between necessary labour and surplus-labour or





between wages and surplus-value is the rate of exploitation.

We have just seen that the working day can be broken down into two parts: necessary labour and surplus-labour. The capitalist mode of production can only develop by continually reducing necessary labour and increasing surplus-labour. For marxists, this relation between necessary and surplus labour is fundamental - not only is the reduction in daily working time compatible with the extension of surplus-labour but it is one of the forces permitting the extension of this free labour.

One possibility for the capitalists to increase surplus-labour is to lengthen the working day, however the struggle of the working class to reduce working time has been one of the elements that has pushed capitalists to increase surplus-labour by reducing necessary labour (1).

*«But when the surplus-value has to be produced by the conversion of necessary labour into surplus-labour, it by no means suffices for capital to take the labour process in the form under which it has been historically handed down, and then simply to prolong the duration of that process. The technical and social conditions of the process, and consequently the very mode of production must be revolutionised, before the productiveness of labour can be increased. By that means only can the value of labour power be made to sink, and the portion of working day necessary for the reproduction of that value be shortened.»*

(Marx, «Capital»)

If a capital A can produce, using new production techniques, a greater amount of goods with less workers than its rivals, it will be able to sell its products at a lower price than its rivals (and will even be forced to if it wants to move the greatest number of goods), but at a higher price than their cost of production (less living work is crystallised in them and, therefore, less wages and more profit) until the value of identical commodities on the market decreases as a consequence of the generalisation of the production process and extraordinary surplus-value thus disappears. It is

through this incessant process that every capitalist is continually on the look-out for technical innovations, as it is only by conquering rival markets that he can gain this extraordinary surplus-value.

Forced to increase surplus-labour by reducing necessary-labour, every capitalist is therefore pushed to increase productivity which decrees the social labour time crystallised in each commodity and, in this way, gives rise to a fall in their value. This drop in value also applies to the labour-power commodity, signifying a reduction in necessary labour. Temporarily, this decrease in the value of labour power makes it possible to realise extraordinary surplus-value. But within this need to reduce necessary labour lies capitalism's fundamental contradiction, between the process of permanent valorisation and devalorisation. Although the only source of profit, surplus-value, is just the living labour contained within each commodity, the growth in productiveness (or increase in the organic component of capital) always signifies an increase in dead labour (technological development) compared to living labour (development of labour power). The realisation of extraordinary surplus-value thus accentuates the decline in the rate of profit.

One can therefore understand that the costs of investment are continuously rising tend to lower the rate of profit (relation between profit realised and the sum of invested capital). At the same time, the constant fall in the value of commodities gives rise to an accelerated devalorisation of fixed capital (buildings, machines, tools). The cost of these machines has to write itself off in a shorter and shorter time, requiring the workforce to achieve maximum profitability: the machines must be operated day and night in order to extract enough surplus-value and decrease the cost of the labour power. This is why, under capitalist production, any increase in productivity means an increase in proletarians' enslavement to machines, to dead labour.

Productivity today is capital's productivity. Capital is not concerned with producing two goods instead of one in order to halve man's suffering - on the contrary, it is concerned, above all else, that a greater surplus-value be realised in these two goods in order to compensate for the devalorisation of commodities produced with less and less living labour. Every increase

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(1) «On the other hand the length of the working day also has its extreme limits although they are very extendable. These extreme limits are provided by the strength of the worker. If the daily exhaustion of his vital strength goes beyond a certain degree, he will not be able to undertake a new activity. Nevertheless, as we said, this limit is extendable. A rapid succession of weak and shortlived generations will supply the work market just as well as a series of strong and longliving generations.» (Marx: «Wages, prices and profits»)

in productivity is therefore accompanied by a relative decrease in wages (relative to the quantity of wealth produced), a decrease in necessary labour and an increase in surplus labour. It is a fundamental reality of Marxism that the degree of exploitation is relative because it is social and historical that enables us to understand the growing antagonism between proletariat and bourgeoisie and to demystify all the «social gains», the «increases buying power», the «reduction in working time».

In Belgium, for example, statistics from the «Université Catholique de Louvain» show that there was an 11% cut in working hours between 1960 and 1973. But what the bourgeoisie does not reveal is that this «progress» is due to the extraordinary rise in work productivity, enabling the workers to produce the same amount of goods in 1973 as in 1960, in only 43% of the working time. If this rise in work productivity had entirely been in the workers' favour and had been used to reduce working time, it could have been reduced not by 11% but by 57%, which would have meant working less than 20 hours a week! (See the article «Le 'Maintien du pouvoir d'achat', un mot d'ordre réactionnaire» in *Le Communiste* No.4)

To limit the cost of new investments as much as possible, the capitalist is obliged to slow down the development of fixed capital. To increase productivity,

he will centre the modernisation of his productive apparatus on the search for better ways of intensifying the work of proletarians. It is this need to increase the intensity of work that forces capital to reduce the length of the working day, not in order to reduce work, but to increase it.

*«Given that any animal force's capacity for action is inversely proportionate to the time during which it is active, at certain limits one gains in efficiency what one loses in duration (...) The enormous impulse that the shortening of the working day gives to the development of mechanical systems and to cost-cutting obliges the worker also, by making more of an effort, to provide greater activity over the same period and thus to condense the work to a degree that he would never have been able to reach without this shortening.»*

*«There is no doubt that the tendency of capital to save itself by the systematic intensification of labour and to transform every perfectioning of the mechanical system into a new means of exploitation must lead to the point where a further reduction in working hours becomes inevitable.»*

(Marx, «Capital»)

**«Capital is contradiction in actuality: it tries to reduce working time to a minimum, whilst making it the sole source and measure of wealth. It reduces it in its necessary form in order to increase it in its unnecessary form, making the time of surplus labour the condition - a question of life or death - of necessary labour time.»**

(Marx, «Capital»)



## The duration of working time: the expression of a worldwide balance of forces between the classes

**H**istorically, capital developed itself by the use of forced labour and by the extension of the working day to its most extreme limits. The descendants of serfs, who were kicked off communal lands and driven out of the countryside by farming, were sent where the first textile manufacturing was being set up, crammed into new industrial centres and locked up in workhouses. Those who tried to escape, the «vagabonds», were pursued pitilessly, maimed and killed (in mass hangings), made examples of in order to terrify proletarians. From Negroes and American Indians to European serfs, they all ended up in these urban industrial penal colonies (factories) or rural ones (plantations). All of them were subjected to the misery of «primitive» expropriation and it was under the terror of weapons, hunger and total misery that they were educated about the ultimate form of exploitation: wage labour.

All the bourgeois who know a little about history admit the truth of these facts but do not see the irreversible class antagonism indicated by them. On the contrary, they only see them as past excesses that progress has left behind, a bygone period. One of their most effective arguments is to highlight the reduction in the working day (16, 14, 12, 10, 8... hours). These are facts that the workers cannot refute, that can be used to convince them that capitalism is not such an inhuman system and that enable the bourgeoisie to paint the «*leisure society*», the «*era of free time*» in glowing colours, to present it as a just reward for so many years of effort and work for capital, for all the services rendered to society. But these are just pipedreams, confirmation of the narrow-mindedness of the bourgeois, who substitute their ideal vision of their own class situation, of their society, for the reality of the world.

In the historical centres of accumulation and concentration of capital, the big cities of South America, North America, Europe, Africa, where millions have been put to work, the legal duration of the working day is on the decrease. However, this is solely due to the fantastic development of productivity, which has allowed capital to stabilize social turmoil and to impose social peace by granting «*advantages*» to certain



categories of proletarians, whilst at the same time increasing the extraction of surplus-value, the rate of exploitation. Similarly, the only way of achieving capitalist valorisation in poorly populated, deserted areas is to maintain extremely long working days to compensate for the weak organic composition of capital, making the working conditions of these workers similar to «historically outmoded» social relations.

In some parts of the U.S.A., for example, (the symbol of «developed society»), the extraction of surplus value takes the form of slavery (see the article in *Comunismo* No.7 on the working conditions of the clandestine immigrants in Texas, Florida, Virginia...). The flourishing multinational food company «Gulf and Western» has its offices in ultra-modern buildings in New York, where its employees work according to the U.S. company legal standards. However, it obtains its raw materials in Haiti where it is public knowledge that the sugar plantations are real slave-camps (work with practically no rest, miserable wages, permanent military

surveillance of the agricultural workers...). But it is not only in America that wage labour can be seen to be no more than a life sentence of forced labour. There are the Siberian labour camps, those in South Africa, Mauritania, Mali, as well as the concentration «communities» in Cambodia, China, Haiti... Where is the industrial centre in which «black work» is not a major, or even an essential, factor for the economy? New York, Chicago, Hong-Kong, they all have their «sweatshops» and masses of home-workers:

*«after eight or nine hours in workshops, the employees take their piece of work home where they continue for another five or six hours...the working conditions in the sweatshops are barely imaginable, it is not rare to see thirty sewing machines crammed into a small room with no ventilation, window, nor door other than the front door.»*

(*Le Monde Diplomatique*, March 1982)

The «clandestine» dress-making workshops of Paris are well known and factories for children in Naples and Bangkok no longer surprise the bourgeois press.

*«The number of children and teenagers less than 15 years old who work throughout the world has increased again over the last two years. Today we calculate at least 55 million, but experts state that this figure grossly underestimates the true extent of the phenomenon.»*

(*Le Monde*, 10-11/5/1981, from an investigation by the International Labour Bureau)

*«Industrial subcontracting drains sections of workers from major metropolitan industry everywhere... In Italy, small businesses, revived by the crisis, functioning on the edge of legality and clandestinity, are often considered to be the basis of the 'second Italian miracle'. In Japan, recent investigations have shown that subcontracting is an essential key to the present success of Japanese products on the world market... Forms of working at home, subcontracting techniques and the «sweating systems», thought to have all but disappeared in the West, have taken on a new lease of life as sectors controlled by major industry. Thus, the dispersed factory (or, as the Italians call it, «diffuse industry») has to be regarded as one of the particularities of the new organisation of productive space.»*

(*Le Monde Diplomatique*, January 1982)

By portraying these facts as excesses of the capitalist system, or as left-overs from pre-capitalist social relations, the bourgeoisie does not only conceal their true extent, but also gives credibility to «normal», «legal» work. But whether produced in «clandestine» workshops or in recognised factories, commodities are the same, produced to valorise capital, in both places the proletarian selling his labour power in order to survive. The needs of proletarians working there are never satisfied: unemployment, for example, mainly affects workers in «official» companies but the black markets and industrial penal-colonies feed off the misery emanating from society. For us, there is no real difference between proletarian labour in New York, Haiti and the Siberian mines and we think it is vital to assert the similarity of wage-slavery all over the world (see the article on worker-aristocracy in *Le Communiste* No.10/11).

Some bourgeois claim that the «historical» reduction in working time is a materialization of the gains of the workers' movement, proof that capitalism and socialism can coexist and that there can be a progressive and peaceful transition from one to the other. It is always dangerous for the bourgeoisie to reverse reductions in working time that were given up under the pressure of workers' struggles without compromising the credibility of its social system (for example, the 40 hours in France in 1936, the 8 hour day in «Soviet» Russia and in Germany following the revolutionary struggles of 1917-1923). After crushing the revolutionary wave of the 1920's, in the name of the workers' well-being, the bourgeoisie was obliged to increase productivity fast, in order to increase the rate of exploitation. The resulting deep and violent changes in the organic composition of capital (increase in constant capital compared to variable capital) led to an exacerbation of competition and conflicts between the different centres of capitalist concentration. The valorisation of capital forced the appropriation and/or destruction of rival productive forces. This mutual destruction, especially of labour power and the generalisation of forced and militarised labour-camps across the planet, represent the supposed «gains» of the working class movement.

In 1848, when the English parliament voted the first laws limiting the length of the working day (the Factory Act), it was to put an end to workers' agitation that was threatening to turn into civil war. After the legislation ruling a 10 hour day (which was accompanied by a wage-cut of 25 %) the «working class, declared criminal, was struck by prohibition and put under the law of suspects» (Marx, «Capital»). In the same way, in France, reforms promulgated after February 1848 «enforced the same limit to the working day on all workshops and factories, without distinction, (...) declaring as a principle what had been gained in



England in the name of women, children and miners only.» (Marx, «Capital»). However, they were soon followed by the bloody crushing of the June insurrection in Paris. The bourgeois used this link between «the constant pressure of the workers' agitating from the outside» and legislative intervention, to rapidly transform working-class struggle into a fight for rights and social laws passed by the State to reform its own system for «social gains».

It was under the threat of proletarian revolt and brewing civil war that the bourgeois class disciplined and unified itself, in spite of many obstacles, at the heart of the State, defender of the general interests of the bourgeois class. Laws limiting the length of the working day supervened when the interdependence of companies had been sufficiently developed by the division of labour and it had become vital for the bourgeoisie to avoid social unrest -caused by the excesses of some capitalists who were «behind the times»- unrest which could compromise the whole of capital. In the same way it became necessary for social reproduction to adapt the workers to their continuously transforming tools and new living conditions. This is why the State passed laws limiting women's labour time and banning child labour, yet at the same time introducing obligatory schooling and a family code (the obligation of domestic work at home).

But despite the reduction in labour time, the proletarian's time is increasingly submitted to capital's needs, be it in his working time, the time taken to travel between home and workplace, the time needed to sort out all the administration imposed upon him - police, union, social security business, etc., the time taken for professional training, the time he needs to treat his work-

induced ailments, the time to reproduce his labour power... all this social time belongs to capital.

Social laws only materialise the bourgeois pretention to manage a system of production based on enslavement to labour, whilst conferring it with some scientific and humanitarian legitimacy. They are no more than the formalisation of the bourgeoisie's humanist and progressist principles that «the worker sells his labour power in order to reproduce it, not to destroy it» and that «even the interests of capital demand a normal working day of him.»

*«Their fantastic development (that of the major branches of industry in which the 10 hour law had been applied) from 1853 to 1860, hand in hand with the physical and moral renaissance of the workers, even struck the least perceptive. The manufacturers themselves, from whom the legal limitation and laws on the working day had been torn limb by limb by half a century's civil war, made the contrast that existed between the still «free» branches of exploitation and the establishments that had submitted to the law stand out ostentatiously.»*

(Marx, «Capital»)

At the time, Marx was already concluding that, far from being the product of a revolutionary transformation of society, «the minutely detailed edicts which ruled the period militarily and precisely, the limits and the breaks in work (...) were born from the circumstances and developed bit by bit as natural laws of the modern mode of production.»

**«But all methods for the production of surplus-value are at the same time methods of accumulation, and every extension of accumulation becomes, conversely, a means for the development of those methods. It follows therefore that in proportion as capital accumulates the situation of the worker, be his payement high or low, must grow worse.**

**Finally, the law which always holds the relative surplus population or industrial reserve army in equilibrium with the extent and energy of accumulation rivets the worker to capital more firmly than the wedges of Hephaestus held Prometheus to the rock. It makes an accumulation of misery a necessary condition, corresponding to the accumulation of wealth. Accumulation of wealth at one pole is, therefore, at the same time accumulation of misery, the torment of labour, slavery, ignorance, brutalization and moral degradation at the opposite pole, i.e. on the side of the class that produces its own product as capital.»**

(Marx, «Capital»)

## The so-called «historical» reduction in France

Affected by the world crisis, all states are faced with the collapse of their «growth rate» (rate of profit). There is a surplus production of goods and at the same time an accelerated devalorisation of fixed capital, which forces the capitalists to restrain investment. In response to this investment crisis (described by the left and the unions as «the flight of capital»), the bourgeoisie busies itself with the umpteenth «industrial restructuration» (discovery of new forms of organisation and management of work). But they are unable to grasp and solve the fundamental factor which gives rise to devalorisation: the contradiction and growing antagonism at the heart of the commodity between use value and exchange value. The measures they take only postpone the inevitable bankruptcies, whilst imposing the needs and interests of the dominant class on the proletarians. By attributing the causes of, or the answers to, crises to the question of form (neo-liberalism or, on the contrary, Keynesian politics, self-management or co-management), the bourgeoisie is arming itself to crush the revolutionary proletariat. The «false consciousness» of the bourgeoisie is dictated by its dominant class position which it has to defend. Thus, behind governmental reforms, are always fundamental class interests. The call for «a reduction in working time to 39 hours a week» by the Socialist government in France, signifies the launching of a new period of systematic attacks on the proletariat.

All capital needs is to render labour power more and more submissive and available in order to control its use and its cost, according to the demands of valorisation, restructuration and concentration. By trying to pass off any increase in productivity as the result of mechanical advances, without recognizing the inevitable intensification of work that it entrains for proletarians, socialist governments make a purely capitalist measure look like a «workers' victory», thus pushing the workers to consider their interests and those of the national economy to be one and the same. Sacrifices, austerity measures, discipline and work are the very principles of the «solidarity» referred to so often by the government. The same principle and reality exists behind any so-called alternatives such as unemployment or a distribution of work that would permit a reduction in working time: an absolute reduction in wages, a supplementary measure aiming

to totally submit the proletariat to the bourgeois state.

The «historic» shift from the 40 to the 39 hour week in France must be seen in the context of the general tendency of all governments, whatever their political «colour», to reduce the legal working time. The official length of the working week in manufacturing industry was changed between 1970 and 1979 from 44.9 to 43.22 in Great Britain, 43.3 to 40.6 in Japan and 39.9 to 35.4 in Belgium. Between 1974 and 1980 the greatest reductions were seen in Norway and Israel, being at least 4 hours. While the working week was 40.6 hours in France in 1980, it was 39.7 in the USA, 39.1 in Australia, 37.7 in Austria, 33.4 in Belgium and 32.9 in Denmark... (*Le Monde*, 16.2.82).

The whole agreement on «the reduction in working time» signed by the bosses and trade unions in France was guided by the aim to make their industry more competitive, thanks to a more systematic use of fixed capital (the duration of use of equipment in the automobile industry reached 6150 hours in the USA, 4000 to 4600 hours in Japan and 3700 to 4000 hours in France) and a greater flexibility of the work timetable (in the USA as in Japan, timetables are well adapted to the needs of the market and overtime is practiced on a large scale, between 10 and 15% in Japan).

«Investments in industrial equipment decrease by 12% in 1981» said a headline in *Le Monde* on 9 June 1982. According to the *Libération* on 14 September 1981, «since 1975 all increases in wealth are the result of efficiency improvements in production». In order to compensate for lack of investment, the bourgeoisie strives to maximise the profitability of its machines by having them operated day and night, by a more mobile, flexible and less expensive mass of proletarians.

With the deepening of the crisis, teamwork and shiftwork has become generalised. Shiftwork is standard for a third of the workers and half of these work on night-shifts. The steel, textile and paper industries and the mines traditionally had the greatest numbers of shift workers, up to 85%. Over the past few years, this mode of work has extended to the food industry and the service sector. The percentage of workers on shifts in processing industry more than doubled between 1957 and 1977. This increase in shift



England in the name of women, children and miners only.» (Marx, «Capital»). However, they were soon followed by the bloody crushing of the June insurrection in Paris. The bourgeois used this link between «the constant pressure of the workers' agitating from the outside» and legislative intervention, to rapidly transform working-class struggle into a fight for rights and social laws passed by the State to reform its own system for «social gains».

It was under the threat of proletarian revolt and brewing civil war that the bourgeois class disciplined and unified itself, in spite of many obstacles, at the heart of the State, defender of the general interests of the bourgeois class. Laws limiting the length of the working day supervened when the interdependence of companies had been sufficiently developed by the division of labour and it had become vital for the bourgeoisie to avoid social unrest -caused by the excesses of some capitalists who were «behind the times»- unrest which could compromise the whole of capital. In the same way it became necessary for social reproduction to adapt the workers to their continuously transforming tools and new living conditions. This is why the State passed laws limiting women's labour time and banning child labour, yet at the same time introducing obligatory schooling and a family code (the obligation of domestic work at home).

But despite the reduction in labour time, the proletarian's time is increasingly submitted to capital's needs, be it in his working time, the time taken to travel between home and workplace, the time needed to sort out all the administration imposed upon him - police, union, social security business, etc., the time taken for professional training, the time he needs to treat his work-

induced ailments, the time to reproduce his labour power... all this social time belongs to capital.

Social laws only materialise the bourgeois pretention to manage a system of production based on enslavement to labour, whilst conferring it with some scientific and humanitarian legitimacy. They are no more than the formalisation of the bourgeoisie's humanist and progressist principles that «the worker sells his labour power in order to reproduce it, not to destroy it» and that «even the interests of capital demand a normal working day of him.»

*«Their fantastic development (that of the major branches of industry in which the 10 hour law had been applied) from 1853 to 1860, hand in hand with the physical and moral renaissance of the workers, even struck the least perceptive. The manufacturers themselves, from whom the legal limitation and laws on the working day had been torn limb by limb by half a century's civil war, made the contrast that existed between the still «free» branches of exploitation and the establishments that had submitted to the law stand out ostentatiously.»*

(Marx, «Capital»)

At the time, Marx was already concluding that, far from being the product of a revolutionary transformation of society, «the minutely detailed edicts which ruled the period militarily and precisely, the limits and the breaks in work (...) were born from the circumstances and developed bit by bit as natural laws of the modern mode of production.»

**«But all methods for the production of surplus-value are at the same time methods of accumulation, and every extension of accumulation becomes, conversely, a means for the development of those methods. It follows therefore that in proportion as capital accumulates the situation of the worker, be his payement high or low, must grow worse.**

**Finally, the law which always holds the relative surplus population or industrial reserve army in equilibrium with the extent and energy of accumulation rivets the worker to capital more firmly than the wedges of Hephaestus held Prometheus to the rock. It makes an accumulation of misery a necessary condition, corresponding to the accumulation of wealth. Accumulation of wealth at one pole is, therefore, at the same time accumulation of misery, the torment of labour, slavery, ignorance, brutalization and moral degradation at the opposite pole, i.e. on the side of the class that produces its own product as capital.»**

(Marx, «Capital»)

## The so-called «historical» reduction in France

Affected by the world crisis, all states are faced with the collapse of their «growth rate» (rate of profit). There is a surplus production of goods and at the same time an accelerated devalorisation of fixed capital, which forces the capitalists to restrain investment. In response to this investment crisis (described by the left and the unions as «the flight of capital»), the bourgeoisie busies itself with the umpteenth «industrial restructuration» (discovery of new forms of organisation and management of work). But they are unable to grasp and solve the fundamental factor which gives rise to devalorisation: the contradiction and growing antagonism at the heart of the commodity between use value and exchange value. The measures they take only postpone the inevitable bankruptcies, whilst imposing the needs and interests of the dominant class on the proletarians. By attributing the causes of, or the answers to, crises to the question of form (neo-liberalism or, on the contrary, Keynesian politics, self-management or co-management), the bourgeoisie is arming itself to crush the revolutionary proletariat. The «false consciousness» of the bourgeoisie is dictated by its dominant class position which it has to defend. Thus, behind governmental reforms, are always fundamental class interests. The call for «a reduction in working time to 39 hours a week» by the Socialist government in France, signifies the launching of a new period of systematic attacks on the proletariat.

All capital needs is to render labour power more and more submissive and available in order to control its use and its cost, according to the demands of valorisation, restructuration and concentration. By trying to pass off any increase in productivity as the result of mechanical advances, without recognizing the inevitable intensification of work that it entails for proletarians, socialist governments make a purely capitalist measure look like a «workers' victory», thus pushing the workers to consider their interests and those of the national economy to be one and the same. Sacrifices, austerity measures, discipline and work are the very principles of the «solidarity» referred to so often by the government. The same principle and reality exists behind any so-called alternatives such as unemployment or a distribution of work that would permit a reduction in working time: an absolute reduction in wages, a supplementary measure aiming

to totally submit the proletariat to the bourgeois state.

The «historic» shift from the 40 to the 39 hour week in France must be seen in the context of the general tendency of all governments, whatever their political «colour», to reduce the legal working time. The official length of the working week in manufacturing industry was changed between 1970 and 1979 from 44.9 to 43.22 in Great Britain, 43.3 to 40.6 in Japan and 39.9 to 35.4 in Belgium. Between 1974 and 1980 the greatest reductions were seen in Norway and Israel, being at least 4 hours. While the working week was 40.6 hours in France in 1980, it was 39.7 in the USA, 39.1 in Australia, 37.7 in Austria, 33.4 in Belgium and 32.9 in Denmark... (*Le Monde*, 16.2.82).

The whole agreement on «*the reduction in working time*» signed by the bosses and trade unions in France was guided by the aim to make their industry more competitive, thanks to a more systematic use of fixed capital (the duration of use of equipment in the automobile industry reached 6150 hours in the USA, 4000 to 4600 hours in Japan and 3700 to 4000 hours in France) and a greater flexibility of the work timetable (in the USA as in Japan, timetables are well adapted to the needs of the market and overtime is practiced on a large scale, between 10 and 15% in Japan).

«*Investments in industrial equipment decrease by 12% in 1981*» said a headline in *Le Monde* on 9 June 1982. According to the *Libération* on 14 September 1981, «*since 1975 all increases in wealth are the result of efficiency improvements in production*». In order to compensate for lack of investment, the bourgeoisie strives to maximise the profitability of its machines by having them operated day and night, by a more mobile, flexible and less expensive mass of proletarians.

With the deepening of the crisis, teamwork and shiftwork has become generalised. Shiftwork is standard for a third of the workers and half of these work on night-shifts. The steel, textile and paper industries and the mines traditionally had the greatest numbers of shift workers, up to 85%. Over the past few years, this mode of work has extended to the food industry and the service sector. The percentage of workers on shifts in processing industry more than doubled between 1957 and 1977. This increase in shift



work has to be seen in relation to the record growth in productivity: the quantity of goods produced in one hour by Belgian industry almost tripled over the same period.

The French Prime minister can say what he likes, that *«reforms will make the machines sweat instead of men, that they will improve the relationship between man and his work and that this will create new and more skilled jobs»*, but a simple run-down of the application of their measures refutes these promises:

- ✓ extension of shiftwork with a fifth team to enable work around the clock.
- ✓ generalisation of temporary work, with short term contracts.
- ✓ extension of overnight work for women and week end work.
- ✓ the fight against «dead time» to make the each of the 35 hours work effective.
- ✓ overtime payments to be limited to only 25% more of usual wages.

As Minister Auroux said: *«Increasing productivity is not a mechanical operation, but rather reflects a kind of support by the wage labourers.»*

These working conditions plan the life of workers to the rhythm and demands of capitalist valorisation. Frequently changing timetables disorganise the rhythm of life of the workers, many of whom are exhausted, with disturbed sleep and eating patterns. Experiments have shown that night work requires more physical and nervous energy to achieve the same production and that morbidity of shift workers is higher than the average. Consequently, the *«socialist government's 39 hour week»* is actually aiming to generalise an increase in the intensity of work and of the exploitation of proletarians. It is this that Prime Minister Mauroy called *«the improvement of the relationship between man and his work»* (2). For him, as for Stalin and all capitalists: *«Man is the most precious capital»*.

There was no need to wait for Raymond Barre to congratulate the Socialist government to understand that the agreements on the «reduction in working time» were the beginning of a major attack on the working class. Just a few months after the legislation was passed the Socialist government established what was referred to as «pecuniary compensation», which turned out to be nothing but a direct attack on wages. New «solidarity taxes» were leached from civil servants and «solidarity» contracts drawn up between unions and bosses (wage-

cuts from 1,6 % at Gervais-Danone and B.S.N. to 20% at Fleury-Michon). The left-wing government made generalised wage-cuts obligatory. It was the rises in V.A.T. on manufactured goods and services, devaluation, wage freezes, decreases in unemployment benefits -all attacks on proletarians' real wages- that served to finance the aid to industry agreed upon in the «solidarity contracts» (*«the companies which succeed in reducing working time to 36 hours a week by September 1983 will be free from social security subscriptions for any extra job vacancies arising from the reduction in working time»*).

The constant increase in unemployment (now more than 2 million under the Socialist government) refutes the «socialist solutions» to unemployment in practice. While Minister Delors admitted that *«the shift from 40 to 39 hours has not created new jobs»*, the so-called reduction in working time, presented as the spearhead of the fight against unemployment, revealed its true aim: a systematic attack on the working class. The French Socialists' employment plans only signify attacks on the «longterm unemployed», cuts in unemployment benefit, increases in the intensity of work and general wage-cuts. The Mauroy plans are merely a repetition of those implemented by the bourgeoisie throughout the world.

In this way, the left not only brings in permanent cuts in relative wages, as every reduction in hours must be accompanied by an increase in productivity (of 10% at Gervais-Danone) and therefore of the intensity of work, but they also plan a drop in real wages (buying power). Yet Mauroy still declared that *«the excessive rises in nominal revenue and wages are preventing our economy from creating jobs. The government has decided to act!»* When can we expect a general drop in nominal wages?

The French government, like all governments, tries to promote the distribution of work, that is to say varying timetables throughout the year in order to, in the words of the president of Air-France, *«compensate for the rigidity of the organisation of working time, which leads to the often insufficient yearly use of more and more sophisticated equipment, thus inhibiting the development of the productivity of such equipment.»* The principle guiding the limitation of working time is therefore that of rationalisation, economy with the cost of labour power, whilst increasing capital's productivity and thus the intensity of work.

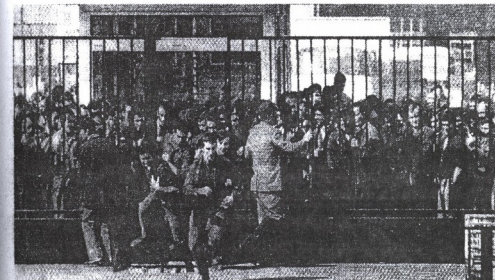
(2) *«Work kills and/or wounds 160 000 people everyday throughout the world, but it creates even more mental illnesses. 1,2 million people today suffer from serious mental disturbances.»* (B.I.T., Report for the International Year of the Handicapped)

In this text we have shown that capital always tries to recuperate working class struggles, workers' demands always expressing proletarians' permanent interest to work less. The formal reduction in working time (the government's 35 hour week) corresponds to an important increase in the rate of exploitation and in the rate of surplus value extracted from the proletarians. In fact, the reduction in working time, from the capitalist point of view (which includes all demands/promises made by governments, unions, leftists...) always corresponds to a decrease in necessary work so as to increase the proportion of surplus work, even if this occurs in a day of 7 instead of 8 hours. From this point of view, if the working day is reduced in length, there must be an increase in its intensity, an increase in exploitation.

The proletarian point of view is obviously completely opposed to this increase in exploitation. Workers' struggle always tries to limit exploitation as much as possible, in its intensity as well as its duration. It is always the proletarians' interest to work less, i.e. to create less surplus value and obtain wage rises. True workers' struggle, real proletarian demands, correspond to this historical perspective alone and therefore turn their backs on bourgeois demands, on pseudo-strikes for the «government's 35 hours week», on the «maintenance of buying power»... all of which amount to nothing else but the

restructuration of capital (camouflaging unemployment with part-time work, for example) and increased exploitation (campaign against «dead time», increased work pace, wage cuts). As long as there has been proletariat and bourgeoisie, workers' struggle has expressed, even at the most basic level, the tendency to reduce working time and to increase wages, be it by sabotage, by theft or by striking, imposing, albeit on a temporary basis, decreased working time and/or higher wages. It goes without saying that in certain struggles, the demand for a 40 hour week really corresponds to the workers' struggle, whereas in others this same concretisation actually signifies the liquidation of the struggle. However, what is crucial is that the character of these demands is directly antagonistic to capital's logic, to the production of surplus value.

Capital aims to strip any concretisation of proletarian interests of its class content, by legalising it and turning it into a «workers' victory», implementing its capitalist content - increasing exploitation. The class difference between, for example, the 1st of May as an international day of struggle and its legalisation/ transformation into a holiday for the glorification of alienated labour is the same as that between the reduction in working time seen from the perspective of the abolition of wage labour, of all work and its legalisation/transformation into capitalist restructuration. In the conflict between the reduction in working time corresponding to the interests of the proletariat and the same formula corresponding to the interests of capital, lies the whole antagonism separating the revolutionary proletariat from the bourgeoisie.



«The alien character of labour emerges clearly in the fact that as soon as no physical or other compulsion exists, labour is shunned like the plague.»

Marx, «Economic and philosophical manuscripts»





# We underline

## **Aids' origin in 1959 ? Science's discrete refutation !**

**1**n April 1993, we published an article entitled «*Aids, pure product of Science*» in French in *Communisme* No.38. Since then, it has been translated and published in our central reviews in Spanish and English (*Communism* No.8) and has been sent around the world, giving rise to much reaction, republication and reproduction. In Argentina and Uruguay, assemblies of proletarians from the health services used our text as a basis for discussion about science and the scientific origin of AIDS. We have had (and continue to receive) numerous expressions of support for the arguments developed in the article.

The reason we are returning to the subject today is that every day current events confirm our arguments further and reveal the ocean of lies and confusion upon which Science sails.

To recap briefly, in the text we assert that AIDS had its origin in the early '70's, a direct product of the new commercial possibilities opened up by molecular biology at that time. In order to distance its scientific origin from the appearance of AIDS, all scientists, researchers,... worked furiously to separate the date of the illness's appearance from the period in which material conditions made laboratory fabrication of the retrovirus possible.

*«... to distance the date of the appearance of HIV from the period in which material conditions meant that it could be produced in laboratories - as early as 1971 -, the researchers (of lies!) simply «discovered» a few cases of AIDS plump in the middle of the 50's and 60's in Africa. But it rapidly became apparent that tests supposedly demonstrating antibodies to the deadly virus in those old test tubes were invalid. In the end it was decided to diagnose it retrospectively on the basis of a vague resemblance to symptoms described in the files of the patients whose blood had been taken!!! To prove the truth of a premise, what better way than to invent it?»*

Since then, in order to persuade everybody that AIDS existed well before 1971, most of the «specialists» have based their justifications on tissue analysis from a man who died in 1959. Hundreds of pages have been written about this case in many scientific papers. At last Science had found proof dating the origin of AIDS to long before the birth of molecular biology! Here is what a journalist said in 1992:

*«There are numerous scientists who think that AIDS first appeared in Equatorial Africa. The first proof of its presence on the African continent dated from a blood test taken in 1959 in what was then called Leopoldville (Belgian Congo) now known as Kinshasa (Zaire).»*

-Extract from «Rolling Stone» in *El Clarin* (Argentina), 22/03/92-

After the barrage of lies published by the press for so many years, people have placed the responsibility for AIDS far away from Science. AIDS ? - not Science's fault but Africa's!

And now that there is no longer any interest in the origin of AIDS, the AFP, creeping quietly on tiptoes, published these few lines:

*«The case of AIDS of 1959 has been shown to be false. Analysed again, the man's tissues contain a virus dating from 1990. The first man recognized as dying of AIDS did not have that illness (...). Tissues that had enabled this diagnosis to be reached had not come from his body (...) Two hypotheses: either an accidental mix up of tissue in the laboratories, which is inconceivable (sic!), or a deliberate swapping of test tubes.»*

A.F.P. in *Le Nouveau Quotidien* (Switzerland), 27/03/95.

**No comment!**

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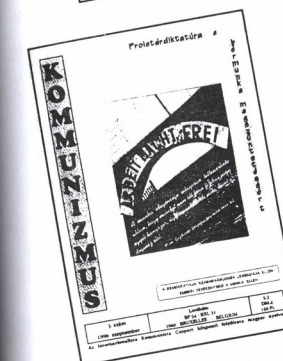
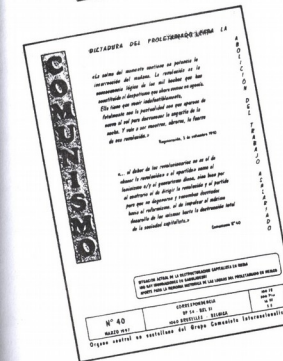
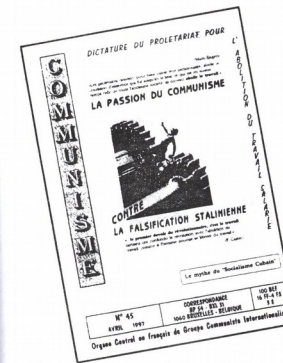
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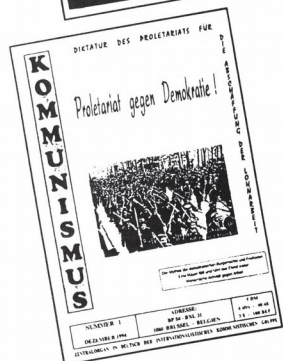
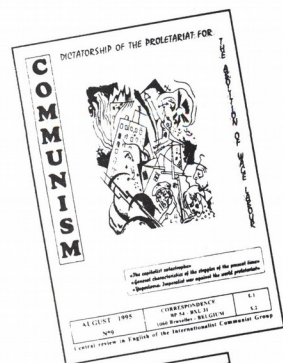
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... Lisez aussi ... Lea tambien ... Read also ...

**«It is not *radical* revolution or  
*universal human* emancipation  
which is a utopian dream for  
Germany; it is the partial,  
*merely* political revolution, the  
revolution which leaves the  
pillars of the building  
standing.»**

**K. Marx, «Critique of Hegel's  
Philosophy of Right», 1844**



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DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT FOR

**ALBANIA****The proletariat  
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On the other hand, the responsibility and the production of our articles are the result of a collective activity - this is the reason why the articles are not signed. They are the expression of a class that lives and struggles to destroy wage-labour and therefore all exploitation, all classes.

-The editorial staff-

# ALBANIA

## The proletariat confronts the bourgeois State

*"The atmosphere in Gjirokaster is mad. Popular revolt transforms itself into total anarchy, there are no more police, no more State, no more rules. The city is exuding enthusiasm, blossoming, has become excited by rebellion."*  
(Le Monde - 11/3/1997)

*"To have a weapon is a pleasure"... an "indisputable drunkenness that provokes anarchy in the combatants"... "Pillaging is increasing, carried out by hordes of the poor or by bandits. No one is hiding and there is sometimes a party atmosphere."*  
(Le Monde - 16-17/3/1997)

### A breath of fresh air in the crushing atmosphere of social peace

The struggle of the proletariat in Albania brought a breath of fresh air to the suffocating atmosphere of social peace which today, still far too often, anaesthetises the reflexes of the proletarian class. By way of acts clearly denouncing the whole of the State structures as their enemy, proletarians in Albania have revived the traditions of struggle by our class, which so many years of the defence of democracy - be it in the name of anti-fascism or anti-communism - had thrown to oblivion. It is so rare today to see examples of rup-

ture from respect for private property, from the settling of conflicts through the courts, etc.. that we are taking the time and the space here to relate what happened in Albania and to develop a chronology in order to define the most important moments in the evolution of the balance of forces between revolution and counter-revolution in the country.

It is impossible to make a chronology which is not an analysis, which does not take a stand in relation to



events. There is no such thing as a neutral chronology, known as "objective" by partisans of free will. Clearly, whatever the media allows to get through is immediately biased (choice of events related, words given to what is going on...) and expresses, in this case, the bourgeois point of view, which can only deny the fact that in Albania (in the initial period anyway) there was confrontation of class against class, outside of and against all democratic regulations. What is objective is that any view of the events depends upon the point of view of where one is standing, either that of the bourgeoisie defending its State and its mercantile system... or the proletariat whose struggle is the destruction of capitalism and the assertion of communism (1).

Whilst the bourgeois press was indignant to witness such "barbaric" methods of struggle, including attacks on banks, burning down police stations, town councils, law courts, pillaging barracks (food and weapons depots), storming prisons and freeing prisoners... on our part, it was with a degree of exaltation that we learned that the movement of struggle in Albania was breaking away from the never-ending demonstrations put on by the opposition parties of the whole world (in Albania, the ex-Stalinists, rechristened 'socialist') and reappropriating the means of struggle of proletarians against the State.

priating the means of struggle of proletarians against the State.

Gjirokaster was won by the revolt on the 9th of March and on the next day the newspaper Le Monde was surprised that the atmosphere was one of enthusiasm, that the pillaging was giving a feeling of festivities in the streets, that the fact of carrying a weapon brought a certain joie de vivre, that the town seemed to light up whilst the anarchy was total, with no more police, no more State... Because steeped in their democratic ideal, positioned on the side of the dominant class, the journalists cannot understand that such movements liberate in one go generations and generations of deprivation, sacrifices, assassinations, imprisonments, etc, during which we have submitted, taken blow after blow. Yes, it is pleasurable to break the chains at last, to reappropriate all that makes us dream, but which we can never touch because it is padlocked behind the barriers of money, prison bars... Yes, it is festive to no longer be afraid and to find oneself in the streets strong and united against private property and the State, against all this order that kills us - this order that will only die when the jubilation of these armed proletarians who have at last found the path of struggle will be shared by proletarians across the whole world.



*"... From the beginning of January 1997, demonstrations of tens of thousands of savers who had lost everything in the bankruptcy of the financial pyramids gathered in Tirana and throughout the country."*

(1) In this sense, yes, both points of view are subjective. But here the comparison ends, because whilst it is in the interest of the bourgeois point of view to hide anything announcing the end of capitalist social order and it is thus logical that it would neglect and hide anything revealing the obituary of its system, the point of view of the proletariat, the point of view of communism, of the historical overtaking of capitalism, has every interest in recognising the objective reality as it is, to unveil the class contradiction which leads to the destruction of the capitalist mode of production. This results in the subjective position of the dominant class leading it to distance itself from objective reality, whereas our subjective position as exploited pushes us to know and to make known the objective reality.

## From the collapse of the pyramids to the uprising of the proletariat

From the beginning of January 1997, demonstrations of tens of thousands of savers who had lost everything in the bankruptcy of the financial pyramids gathered in Tirana and throughout the country.

The building societies offering mind-boggling interest rates (from 35% to 100% per month) had attracted even those in the remotest corners of Albania. In order to invest in Sude, Populi, Xhaferri, Vefa, Kamberi or others, to deposit a bit more money each month in the kiosks hurriedly set up in the streets, the Albanians had sold all they could. Flats, cars, herds, land had all been sold off. The sums paid to the first depositors merely came from the growing contributions of new deposits and the collapse of these companies was inevitable. Hundreds of thousands of savers found themselves completely stripped of everything. 70-80% of Albanian households were affected. Of course the poorest were, as always, the most badly affected.

The fervour to invest in the financial pyramids expresses the persistence of the myth which portrays easy money in the West, that merely sleeping on one's income is enough to wake up rich in the morning...

Up until 1990-91, the need to defend the myth of the existence of a socialist Albania had kept the borders closed except for exchange and investment with Eastern bloc countries. Then, as in Russia and the other Eastern countries (the myth of socialism as a fundamental parameter for maintaining social peace having served out its time) they began to talk of liberalising the system, of putting an end to restrictions, of the possibility of everyone growing rich... The wall was knocked down in Berlin and in Albania they deserted the 700,000 bun-

kers that Enver Hoxha (2) had built out of fear of foreign aggression.

As in Russia (3) and elsewhere in the East the extent of protectionist measures, alterations in imperialist alliances and economic and social reforms marked a brutal acceleration in the rate of profit and deepened in an even more phenomenal way the gulf between bourgeois and proletarians. From December 1990 to May 1991, food riots exploded all over Albania. Western investors drew back in the face of such uncertainty over the perspectives of profit. 1991-92 was marked by the total collapse of Albanian industry and the persistence of social unrest. From December 1991 to February 1992 a second wave of riots swept the country. Each time, the riots unleashed pillaging, arson on police stations, public buildings, factories, shops and warehouses (4)... Albania, classed as high risk, was seeped in international aid to avoid a social explosion.

The German, Turkish and North-American States gave financial support to the Albanian army, to transform it into a powerful army, ready for confrontation. But despite these bourgeois preparations, the class struggle has shown us once again how a situation prepared by the bourgeoisie can become uncontrollable.

The attraction of the myth of Western paradise is so strong that the opening of the borders resulted in a mass exodus that the Albanian State and also all the surrounding states, in particular Italy, were obliged to curb violently. It was not a question of an exodus of capital, seeing as Albania is an area of desertification of capital, but an exodus of proletarians subjugated by the myth that going to the West will mean the end of all misery. Remember the influx of some 40,000 refugees disem-

(2) Enver Hoxha, historical stalinist leader and President of Albania whose end in 1985 constituted the prelude to the death of "socialism in one country".

(3) On this subject read the text "Situation actuelle de la restructuration capitaliste en Russie" [The current situation of capitalist restructuration] in *Communisme* No. 44, December 1996.

(4) Each time, the bourgeoisie tries, by way of elections, to turn the anger directed against the very essence of its domination, money, commodities, capital, by exposing one or other party, one or other government to popular condemnation. In March 1991, the electoral comedy gave the Socialist Party (rechristened ex-Stalinist party) the star part. In March 1992, it was the Democratic Party's turn, a new party founded in 1991 by Berisha (also a rechristened ex-Stalinist), to take the leading role in the electoral masquerade.



barking, in spite of everything, in the south of Italy in March and August 1991. The slightest rumour of a boat leaving or visas being issued resulted in a gathering of thousands of young people in the ports or in front of Western embassies, as happened in Cuba. As a consequence, this exodus continued to be the object of a vile clandestine trade. The smugglers of clandestine immigrants towards Italy labelled their clients with the term "walking meat" and the cost of the crossing varied between 450 and 600 dollars (5).

With the bankruptcy of the financial pyramids, proletarians in Albania were still paying for the total disillusion which accompanied the gaining of consciousness that in the East, as in the West, it is money that makes and unmakes policies, opens or closes borders, accumulates in the pockets of some by emptying the pockets of others. The myth of easy money is so powerful that it led proletarians' smallest savings into the financial gulf of building societies. Disillusion persists when one has staked everything on them and has to leave all to them.

In May 1996, on the evening of legislative elections which assigned all parliament's seats to the Democratic Party, the flag of Vefa, the largest financial company compromised in the pyramids, had pride of place in the victors' gallery. A journalist commented "*Vefa has illustrated the miracle of capitalism, the Albanian miracle, the miracle of a country finally tearing itself from poverty.*" The feeling of betrayal was very strong at the heart of the population when the pyramids, including that generated by Vefa, collapsed as they were so linked with Berisha's government and with the Democratic Party (6). Even more so, given that in 1992 the Albanian people elected with an overwhelming majority, with cries of "fitoi" (victory!), their new president, Sali Berisha, as a liberator who, in the name of the struggle against the tyranny of the Stalinist regime had managed to re-seal national unity. It was at this time that an appeal was launched for international aid to relaunch the economy in Albania and that the United States became Albania's main partner.

Today the situation is completely different. The bank-

ruptcy of the building societies shook up the social climate. Contrary to what happened in Macedonia or in Bulgaria, where the bourgeoisie boasts that it managed to contain the discontentment of the "rejects" with meagre compensations, in Albania, demonstrations and other forms of protest became generalised, showing clearly that the proletariat had not been put down by the State. In Skopje, the government and the national bank urgently organised "*committees to compensate injured parties*", undertaking inquiries, trials.. Even worse, in Sofia, in compensation for all, the government erected a monument "*to the memory of victims of the pyramid*" (7).

In Albania, the demand was "*we want our money, we want to be reimbursed 100%*". All through the month of January, demonstrations became more and more turbulent and the anti-riot police carried out violent attacks.

When the government did take measures to put an end to speculation it was too late, it could no longer control the situation. On the 10th January 1997, it took action against two institutions at the base of the setting up of the pyramids: Xhaferri and Populi.

Even the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund intervened to put a limit on this type of enterprise. These institutions emphasised that they are private companies based only on speculation, allowing some people to get rich very quickly, but who do not necessarily meet the interests of the development of capital which is firstly based on the relaunching of production. On the 4th February, Tritan Shehu, deputy prime minister adopted this viewpoint and declared (after having amply filled his own pockets with this easy money!): "*We have resolved to destroy these pyramid saving schemes, because the future of Albania does not lie in them. Our future is production and we are going to work more and more.*" He should have said "*we are going to make you work more and more*".

The Berisha government was disowned as much by the worldwide bourgeoisie as it was by the proletariat emerging from its torpor.

(5) In 1995, the turnover of this trade in "walking meat" of not only Albanian, but also Kurdish, Chinese... origin reached 380 million dollars.

(6) These links were extremely personal: a whole series of government and Democratic Party members were linked to these societies.

(7) Neighbouring Macedonia went through a similar situation with the collapse of a speculative financial society, the TAT, which ruined thirty thousand savers, to the tune of 80 million dollars. Another example is Russia in 1994, S.Mavredi who, initially possessing just 50 dollars, promised interest rates of 600% per year. He quickly managed thousands of dollars before declaring himself bankrupt and ruining thousands of people. On his release from prison, he got himself elected to the Duma! The oldest example in the memory of the press dates back to 1919 in Boston, USA, where Ch.Ponzi promised rates of 50% in 90 days. He thus collected 20 million dollars, paid out 15 million and pocketed the other 5.

In Peshkopija, commiserating greatly, President Berisha asked the large savers to come forward (tough shit for the small ones!). In response, crowds gathered in the main street. A hundred people attacked the police station with stones. Six policemen were injured and then the rioters set fire to the buildings of the town council. The slogans were: "*We want our money!*" and "*Down with Berisha!*"

On the 19th January in Tirana, anti-riot police intervened in force in the Skanderbeg Square to disperse an angry crowd of 5000 demanding to be reimbursed for the sums they had put into savings accounts. The Socialist Party was still in opposition following the (contested) poll in May 1996 and was profiting from the situation of mobilisation of the proletariat to take revenge on the Democratic Party. It called for participation in this demonstration, hoping to put itself at the head of a peaceful protest movement as in Belgrade or Sofia. But this demo, as well as those that were to follow, rapidly made the Socialist party and all other bourgeois parties give up all hope of preventing the explosion of the terrible anger brewing across the whole country, as had already been witnessed by the confrontations in Berat the same day.

In Berat (100km south of Tirana) stones flew against the buildings of the police, the courts, ministerial offices and those of the Democratic Party. Two hundred demonstrators were arrested. The Parliament called for the army to protect official buildings.

On the 24th January in Lushnjë, 100 km south of Tirana, where the pyramids had affected the greatest number, demonstrators threw explosive devices up to the first floor of the Town Hall. It set fire and the two thousand people gathered in the town centre made a barrage and prevented the firemen from reaching it. The demonstrators demanded reimbursement of their money, which they had deposited in the Xhaferri foundation, which had gone bankrupt the week before.

Towards the end of January it seemed that Berisha had not appreciated the scale of the movement and thought that he could put an end to the disturbances by giving the secret police, the SHIK (ex-Sigourimi, the secret police of the Stalinist period (8)) free rein. The

more that the gatherings turned to rioting, the more brutal the police became. The SHIK ruled with its usual terror: arrests, interrogations, beatings, imprisonments, assassinations, disappearances...

For its part, the bourgeois opposition, largely grouped around the Socialist Party, structured itself to lead its campaign against the Berisha government. On the 30th January, ten opposition parties, the Socialist Party amongst them, formed a coalition as the Forum for Democracy (FD). The FD demanded the resignation of the Berisha government which they held responsible for the economic chaos wreaked by the devastating effects of the pyramid companies and called for the constitution of a government of technocrats to manage the crisis, whilst waiting for the anticipated elections to be organised.

On the 30th January still, Koha Jone, the most important "independent" newspaper, mouthpiece of "independent intellectuals" (one component of the bourgeois opposition) published a manifesto declaring: "*it is clear that the anger of the people is directed against a State which has set itself up as a judge after having acquitted the thieves.*" The opposition knew how to use words in which proletarians in struggle would be able to recognise themselves. But for the opposition, the State they were condemning was not the power of the bourgeois class, it was the Berisha government. Moreover, the editorial members of this newspaper, the leaders of the Socialist Party and other known figures of the bourgeois opposition accused of being at the origin of the troubles were arrested. All the ingredients were there to lock the movement in a bourgeois alternative: to support the martyr opposition against the new tyrant: Berisha.

On the bourgeois political plan, the picture was like this: in response to proletarian mobilisation, the opposition designated Berisha as the target, whilst throwing proletarians in struggle and members of the bourgeois opposition in prison side by side, thus pushing the former to assemble under the banners of the latter, whose only goal was to erode the movement by going to the polls.

This plan was intelligent, but did not take account of the revolutionary potential which this series of demon-

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(8) Just as they repackage commodities, rethink publicity to sell it better, the old secret police of the Stalinist period, the Sigourimi, were given a new label and a new uniform. A few of the too-well-known leaders were retired out, others reorientated towards employers' militias to watch over the workplaces, cover the workers' assemblies... here was the SHIK ready to recommence its nasty job. Nothing new! History repeats itself all over the world and during every period: when a secret police force has become too well-known for its repressive practice, its name is changed, as are some of its members to enable them to assume their task more effectively. This is particularly useful when they change the form (or rhetoric) of domination and the State requires a bit of a clean-out. In general, the same structure is maintained, the same files, the same buildings, the same methods and they use the same prisons... except, of course, if the proletarian revolt manages to wipe all of this out!



strations of proletarian dissatisfaction contained. It is clear that in the movement proletarians expressed much more than just lost money and the resignation of Berisha. Discontent still within the framework of the bourgeois opposition was being taken over more and more by explosions of class hatred against the State, as witnessed by the frequent attacks on official buildings.

But the border between proletarian struggle spontaneously directed against the whole of the structures of the bourgeois State and the battle of the bourgeois opposition to restructure the State was not yet clear enough in the movement. This lack of definition expressed itself, for example, in the fact that the bourgeois opposition was not driven away from demonstrations (and equally in the fact that one part of the movement was demanding justice from the State to sanction those responsible for the financial pyramids) still leaving the coast clear to the opposition to take over the reins of the movement.

At the beginning of February 1997, Berisha promised that all those who had lost out would be compensated either in cash or in savings books. The reimbursement should have started on the 5th February thanks to accounts of two of the main investment funds being seized. However no one had any confidence in bits of paper that the State would give them again in exchange for promises. On the same day, the most important of the pyramid companies in Vlorë, Gjallica, declared itself bankrupt, leaving a deficit of 360 million dollars and declared its total inability to reimburse anyone.

Following this news, on the 5th February, 30,000 people took to the streets in Vlorë (a port with between 60 and 80,000 inhabitants, 210km south of Tirana). As the demo was heading towards the port, the police charged and tried to chase the demonstrators with water pumps and truncheons. Masked members of the SHIK beat the demonstrators and took them to their cars. The confrontations resulted in 2 deaths and a hundred injured, most of these on the side of the demonstrators. However later on, a group of anti-riot police were surrounded. Several of them were undressed by the demonstrators and ran in the road in their underwear. The forces of order withdrew!

That day marked the beginning of a permanent mobilisation in Vlorë: every day started with a big gathering (at around 10 o'clock) which turned into a demonstration. At about 5pm a further meeting was held to decide what actions were to be organised for the next day. All the opposition party leaders, present at these demonstrations, called for calm. After a week of demonstrations, these calls for calm were still not heeded. Nevertheless, the demonstrators slogan remained "*Down with Berisha!*"

The Forum for Democracy called for a gathering in Tepelenë. Only about 60 people attended, even though the mobilisation was becoming stronger and stronger. The movement occupied the streets and did not want to allow itself to be distracted by speeches on democracy.

These examples show that proletarians say "yes" to the opposition when it demands the reimbursement of money tied up in the building societies and when it shouts "*Down with Berisha!*". However, when the opposition calls for calm and reflection on democracy they say "no". But if "*Down with Berisha!*" can mean "*Down with the State!*" from the mouths of proletarians, then "*Down with Berisha!*" means "*Down with Berisha's government!*" from the mouths of the opposition and leads to the demand for early elections. The movement carries these two completely antagonistic perspectives. These yes's and no's expressed in the movement illustrate again the difficulty the proletariat has in choosing its camp. It finds it hard to extricate itself from the bourgeois alternatives and reacts positively or negatively to the commands of the bourgeois parties but is still not at the point of defining its own direction.

The tactics of the counter-revolution rested on this ambiguity, this lack of clarity, which pushed the movement to leave the streets and to take up the straight path of the vote to express its disagreement. This is the well-traced path of pacification of the movement supported by the world bourgeoisie which, making reference to similar, albeit less explosive situations in Bulgaria and in Romania, never stops stressing the "*road to salvation via the polling booths*".

In many towns the demonstrations, still within the framework of the opposition parties, became more and more turbulent, there were frequent explosions and the police became more and more brutal, making massive arrests.

In Tirana, the capital, Berisha's party mobilised itself and a thousand people participated in a rally for democracy and non-violence (as always, those who are the most consistent in the organisation of state terrorism prefer the rhetoric of non-violence, which guarantees them the monopoly of the armed force). The SHIK continued its reign of terror. Its members frequented cafés in which animated discussions on recent events had brought people together and beat them up.

The 9th of February marked an escalation in the violence of repression. In Vlorë, the police imprisoned at night those they considered to be the leaders. The demonstrators gathered in front of the police buildings and demanded the release of the prisoners. The cops fired and at least 26 people were injured.



Vlorë, February 10th:  
SHIK members try to throw  
a demonstrator in the fire.

The next day, the 10th February, still in Vlorë, 40,000 people were demonstrating and set fire to the headquarters of the Democratic Party. There were a further 81 wounded, one of whom died from his gunshot wounds. In the surrounding areas proletarians made solidarity with the struggle of their companions in Vlorë and came to reinforce their ranks (5000 from Fier, several hundred from Berat, Tepelenë and elsewhere).

In Tirana the forces of order couldn't manage to prevent rallies. The tension rose. The demonstrators shouted "Vlorë, Vlorë!".

The confrontations in Vlorë spread like wildfire and became the emblem of revolt across the country.

Gjirokastrë was taken over by the biggest demonstration yet. On the 11th February in Vlorë, 30,000 people attended the funeral of the demonstrator who had been killed by the police the day before and the police behaved particularly discretely that day. But tensions rose, looking like "*dangerously uncontrolled*" confrontations could explode at any moment.

Up until this time, the movement was marked by stormier and stormier demonstrations, leading to serious confrontations with the police forces and the burning down of state buildings (mainly the headquarters of the Democratic Party and the council) resulting in massive arrests and many deaths. But the fact of having made the forces of order retreat several times marked a tendency to break with the usual pattern of demos (the State maintaining the initiative in any confrontation) and this constituted a significant qualitative step.

The repression that Berisha thought would decimate the movement actually had the opposite effect. Far from

making the movement withdraw, it stirred up combativity and reinforced the determination to struggle until the cause was won. On top of this, the desire for revenge came to light. Not only revenge against the police who beat, isolate, torture, massacre, but globally against all that leads to this extreme situation, against all those hard years of precarious survival without ever knowing what tomorrow will bring, against all those promises in the name of which we tightened our belts even further, against the torture of hunger, against intimidation, daily humiliation, against all the social relationship of wage labour/capital, against the State.

The limits of the movement, however, continued to express themselves in the fact that the opposition parties had not yet been thrown out of demonstrations and that proletarians were expecting the State to give them justice and to punish the fraudulent companies.

On the same day, the 11th February, the government was envisaging declaring a state of emergency in Vlorë. The Prime Minister, Meksi, announced on the radio: "*We must defend the constitutional order and respond to an extraordinary situation with extraordinary measures.*" But the decree submitted to the parliament met with opposition from the members of the Democratic Party who, coming from the region of Vlorë, had realised that such a measure would only increase the tension that had been particularly heightened by arrests and assassinations over the previous few days. In order to prevent the hatred of the police turning on the whole of the structures of the State, the government decided to sack the police Commissioner in Vlorë.

During the week of the 12th February, the movement spread to nearly all the towns in the South and some in the North. The demonstrations became more



and more widespread and the confrontations stronger and stronger. There was another death on the side of the demonstrators in Fier.

A further large demonstration took place in Tirana on the 19th February, which the police were unable to put a stop to. There were shouts of “Vlorë, Vlorë!” everywhere.

On the 20th February, a group of 40 students started a hunger strike at Vlorë University. They appealed for non-violence, demanded the resignation of the Meksi government, the formation of a government of technocrats to ensure the interim period until new elections could be held, the dismissal of those responsible for the television and judicial proceedings against those responsible for police brutality! What a programme! According to these students, the brutal attack on the standard of living of proletarians who had lost everything in the bankruptcies, the repression of the struggles, etc, could merely be put down to the fact of a few villains who had abused their position of responsibility. To demand a government of technocrats supposes that there could be a neutral government above the classes! As for all reformists in the world, it was just a problem of poor management which could be solved by elections.

With their programme for restoration of the State, these students were clearly on the side of the counter-revolution. The counter-revolution which materialises itself in the proposed means of struggle: in the face of ever more ferocious opposition, they suggested turning the other cheek. Whilst a collective force was pouring onto the streets and starting to take the upper hand in the face of murderous assaults by the riot police, they proposed taking to one's bed, wasting vital energy... Why not get down on one's knees and pray?... to move the State to pity, the State that at the very same moment was receiving international support to pay and re-equip its various police forces.

Towards the end of February Berisha sent his Home Secretary to Germany to obtain an advance with which to pay for new equipment for the police. Other governments also expressed their support for Berisha's government. The United States had counted on Berisha's government to make their support for Albania a bridgehead in the region, estimating that Berisha and his party would have embezzled the capital first in the contested ballot of May 1996 and then in the collapse of the speculative building societies supported by the government. Today, concerned to speed up national reconciliation, the United States have put maximum pressure on Berisha's government to compel it to engage in dialogue with the opposition grouped around the Socialist Party.

On the 28th February, the Meksi/Berisha government

decided to clear out the hunger strikers who were occupying the university. A group of plainclothed policemen, members of the SHIK, prepared to surround the buildings. The reaction was not expected: many proletarians recognised themselves in all those who are repressed by the State, despite the reformist demands of the students, and thus took up position to act in the face of police violence. In fact, the rumour that the police had been preparing to flush out the hunger strikers by force had led more than a thousand people armed with knives and guns to gather in front of the university. The numbers kept on growing and soon there were ten thousand demonstrators who, from the university, made their way to the SHIK's siege and attacked it with stones. There were exchanges of gunfire between the demonstrators and the SHIK, who entrenched themselves in their buildings. Far from leaving them behind their walls, the demonstrators went on the offensive and set them on fire, with the aid of grenades. Three SHIK members were set alight and burned to death. Others who tried to flee were hanged. The total death toll amongst these SHIK bastards was six. This is not huge when one takes into account how many class brothers have disappeared, tortured and assassinated by this elite corps formed by the best bourgeois torturers. Unfortunately, there were three deaths on our side, as well as thirty wounded.

The demonstrators had got wind of the government's hesitation to declare a state of siege in Vlorë and marched towards an army barracks, forced open the doors and took all the arms they could without meeting with the slightest resistance from the officers and the soldiers inside the barracks. A heavy machine gun was installed in front of the university. Confrontations continued throughout the night of the 28th February to the 1st of March.

These struggles marked **the end** of the initial period in which the waves of protest and other proletarian expressions were still too much prisoner of the expectation of compensation by the State and of the illusion that the State, governed in a different way, could be fairer, more equitable,... and the beginning of an insurrectional uprising in which the proletariat no longer expects anything from the government and leads it to open war, taking up the path of direct action against the State, of the assertion of class against class. This does not mean that there was not a whole series of ideologies, traps, bourgeois perspectives (which is inevitable in an international period like this one), including during this crucial period in which the enemy was organising itself to recuperate and lead a movement which was slipping through its fingers.



## The insurrectional character of the uprising in Albania

On Saturday the 1st March the town of Vlorë was in the hands of the insurgents. The funerals of the three demonstrators killed the previous night passed off peacefully. However, further confrontations took place over the evening, resulting in five more wounded. Two other arms and munitions depots were pillaged. Armed proletarians commandeered cars and left for neighbouring cities in order to spread their movement.

The gunpowder was already on all the roads, over all the cities, just waiting for a spark. Those sparks flying from Vlorë spread the explosion at full blast in the south of the country.

In Vlorë, Sarandë and Delvinë the situation was declared "out of control". Dini, the Italian foreign minister declared that the revolt was led by "*bands of delinquents stirred up by left-wing extremists with the aim of attacking Tirana.*"

In Lushnjë, demonstrators intercepted two vans packed full of anti-riot police and forced them to abandon them, thus disarming 40 or so policemen.

On the same day in Tirana, the parliament was called to a special session in order to debate the measures necessary to quell the revolt in Vlorë. That same evening, Berisha announced the resignation of the Meksi government, a decision which had no impact on the movement whatsoever!

Whilst the Forum for Democracy was denouncing a "*further attempt by President Berisha and the Democratic Party to fool the Albanian People, in order to hold onto the power resting on the theft of votes, on a speculative financial system, on violence and terror*" and was calling for further "*free elections*", the proletariat responded by real practical criticism of electoral perspectives: Generalised armament of the struggle against the State!

On Sunday 2nd March, in response to the resignation of the government, Berisha's official residence, situated on the hills of Vlorë, were pillaged and then burned down!

Near Vlorë's port, ten thousand rebels surrounded the garrison of Pacha Liman, a strategic base. The sol-

diers abandoned their positions and, finding himself alone, the commander opened the doors to the insurgents. He was later to become the organiser of the defence of Vlorë against a possible intervention by troops still in Berisha's pay.

During an assault on a barracks the insurgents marched into the soldiers camp, not to attack the soldiers, but to take arms. Nowhere did the conscripts in the barracks oppose the pillaging. On the contrary, soldiers everywhere and even the majority of officers gave the rebels a warm welcome. There was even fraternisation: proletarians in uniform recognised themselves in the struggle of their insurgent class brothers and joined the movement armed.

The government had to rapidly acknowledge that it could no longer count on its army.

In Sarandë (300km South of Tirana) about 3000 demonstrators brandishing sticks poured onto the streets without meeting any resistance. Struck by the determination of the demonstrators, the police disappeared surreptitiously from the area. Proletarians pillaged and burnt down the (empty) police station and the abandoned police cars. The same fate was reserved for the SHIK buildings. 4000 Kalachnikov rifles fell into the hands of the rebels who, continuing on their route, attacked the courthouse, the Stock Exchange, the prison, liberating a hundred or so prisoners. Following this, the insurgent proletarians set themselves a new objective: to attack the bank, that den of capital where all their money had been swallowed up, thus abandoning all their illusions regarding obtaining compensation from the State. The whole town centre was in flames. The police did not try to intervene at any point.

In Himaren (a coastal town between Vlorë and Sarandë) rioters set the Town Hall and the Police Station on fire.

In Delvinë, between Sarandë and Gjirokaster, the rioters burnt down the police headquarters, the public prosecutor's department and also pillaged a branch of the savings bank.

In Levan (a village situated between Vlorë and Fieri), a group of demonstrators broke into a barracks and pil-



laged an arms depot, without meeting with any resistance.

In Gjirokaster there had already been an unlimited general strike for several days. Rioters invaded the police station, helped themselves to weapons, freed the 15 prisoners inside and then burnt the building down. The police did not put up any resistance. The next day a commercial complex belonging to the Gjallica savings society was set on fire.

Road blocks were set up by the rebels on the Vlorë-Sarandë road and at Tepelenë.

In Tirana, a further demonstration of six thousand people was marked by violent confrontations in the course of which cameramen from Italy and Germany were thrashed. The television was recognised for what it is: a police force serving the State, policing by selective images which impose on us what we should think about events, policing by pictures, obtaining photographs of the demonstrators most involved in confrontations for the cops. The demonstrators went on to attack police cars, turning them over and setting them on fire. The police force withdrew.

In the face of this situation, the bourgeoisie imposed exceptional measures and decreed a state of emergency across the whole of Albanian territory for an indefinite period, until the "*reestablishment of constitutional and public order*". This meant curfew at 8pm, police control with the right to shoot without warning, prohibition of any gathering of more than 4 people and the right to open fire to disperse crowds, a law for which the anti-riot or secret police had not waited before firing into crowds previously!

The members of parliament had adopted this law a few days earlier to allow a state of emergency to be decreed in the event of an "*attempt to overthrow con-*

*stitutional order, attacks on arms depots, strategic installations and public buildings and attacks on economic life and individual liberties*". Once again, the bourgeoisie showed us how they prepare themselves to ensure their social order. Once again, we can see that when the proletarian struggle is powerful and determined, none of these measures can manage to stop it.

In Tirana, Berisha was careful to eliminate any situation in which people could gather and which could "degenerate": markets, rallies, sporting events... Hundreds of "*potential agitators*" were thrown in prison.

On Monday 3rd March, despite everything and whilst the south of the country had taken up weapons against the State, the Parliament renewed Berisha's presidential term for a further 5 years. Far from realising the magnitude of the movement, Berisha decided to reestablish order by way of force, far away from the cameras.

He censored the airwaves and the press. Apart from the official channels, TV channels, radio broadcasts and newspapers were forbidden. The offices of Koha Jone, the opposition's most important newspaper, were burned down with the aid of Molotov cocktails thrown by members of the secret police. Twenty people were arrested. Only one (pro-governmental) paper, Rijlinda Demokratika, was allowed and this dedicated all its columns to the reelection of Sali Berisha as Head of State.

Berisha ordered the military to surround the zone from Vlorë to Sarandë, but the Albanian army was not trustworthy. Proletarians serving under a flag were not prepared to turn their arms against proletarians fighting against the State. In the south of the country desertion and fraternisation was widespread.

For the government, the first issue was to "*liquidate the communist revolt*" and only to discuss it afterwards, as Tritan Shehu, Minister of Foreign affairs and head of

"You are horrified at our intending to do away with private property. But in your existing society, private property is already done away with for nine-tenths of the population; its existence for the few is solely due to its non-existence in the hands of those nine-tenths. You reproach us, therefore, with intending to do away with a form of property, the necessary condition for whose existence is the non-existence of any property for the immense majority of society.

In one word, you reproach us with intending to do away with your property. Precisely so; that is just what we intend."

-K.Marx, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, 1848-

the Democratic Party, declared. In order to tighten up discipline in the heart of the army, Berisha dismissed the chief of the staff of the army, accusing him of failing to show enough zeal to calm the rebellion and failing in the security of military posts, barracks and arms depots, allowing the rebels to invade them and help themselves to weapons. He replaced him by a military advisor, a member of the SHIK. The government also reminded the military that they would face penal sanctions if they refused to obey orders.

As a direct confrontation between the army and the rebels risked spreading the movement of desertion and fraternisation in the north of the country, tanks sent to the south were finally driven, not by soldiers, but by members of the SHIK. Behind those soldiers charged with aiming the artillery at the bastions of the insurrectional movement were surveillance units, military police, the secret service... all designed to prevent the soldiers from abandoning their posts or from turning their weapons against their officers.

Berisha called for the rebels to give up their weapons and reminded them that those who refused were exposing themselves to the risk of being shot at without warning.

The army regained control of the situation as far as Fier, a hundred kilometers south of Tirana. Berisha decided to isolate the south of the country by severing all means of communication, be it telephone, satellite, whatever.

Since the proclamation of the state of emergency, queues had formed in front of the bakeries in Tirana. Prices rose from 30 to 40%.

In Vlorë the last of the "foreign nationals" and journalists were evacuated by the helicopters of the Italian army, the anti-riot forces and the army withdrew and only the plain-clothed men of the secret police remained. Four people were executed as they attempted to hand back their weapons, following the demands by the government to do so.



The polarisation between the two camps reinforced itself but one cannot say that Vlorë represented the proletarian camp and Tirana the bourgeois camp. It is clear that the movement was not as strong in Tirana, that it had not taken on an insurrectional dimension. Tirana was the central seat of all the State's forces. There was a more powerful control over everything that moved. But just as in Vlorë, revolution and counter-revolution confronted each other in Tirana. Whilst all the journalists and government representatives, the police forces

and the army were evacuated from Vlorë, the whole of the counter-revolution organised around the bourgeois opposition to the Berisha government remained, crystallised notably in the *Committee for Public Safety*.

On Tuesday the 4th March, Sali Berisha once again turned down proposals to broaden the government towards the opposition, in spite of international pressure to do so. He continued to accuse the Socialist Party of stirring up "armed rebellion".

The American government was worried about the turn of events. It understood that allowing financial swindles to run at full pelt and then confronting the proletariat with a whip could only lead Albania into dangerous waters. But it also understood that disembarking with NATO forces in Albania could provoke an extension of the troubles into what the worldwide bourgeoisie call the "powder keg of the Balkans", whose explosion they dread so much.

From their side, with Berisha's declaration of war, the proletarians responded by arming themselves!

In Vlorë the arsenals of several barracks were stripped. The rebels prepared for the army: gunmen took up position on the rooftops of houses, barricades were set up at the entrance of the city, using the carcasses of cars, look-outs took up position on the neighbouring hills to watch the outskirts of the town. One bridge was mined. A few hundred metres beyond the bridge, tanks appeared. A few minutes later, without engaging in battle, they turned around and left.

The army had to face fierce resistance in Styari. The military offensive was repelled in 40 minutes. After this first engagement the army withdrew.

In Sarandë also, far from thinking about handing in their weapons, the question being asked was: where to get weapons to protect themselves? The rebels decided to go and look in the naval and police buildings. The whole city went - children, women, men. The police stations had already been abandoned and in the Navy there were only a few officers left who had been sent home by soldiers who had already gone over to the side of the movement. The insurgents got hold of a battery of artillery, canons and heavy machine guns with the capacity to control the region within a radius of 30km, as well as six warships. They brought back large quantities of arms and bags stuffed with munition from the naval base. Between ten thousand to fifteen thousand armed men gathered in the town centre to organise barricades, how to guard them and a defence in case of attack. Groups of youths armed with Kalashnikov rifles and submachine guns attacked Turkish, Greek and French journalists and demanded that taped recordings be destroyed.



The army attacked: army units tried to regain the port but armed insurgents awaited them, firm-footed. Despite tanks being sent in, the naval base of Sarandë stayed in the hands of the rebels.

In order to prevent any further arrival of army tanks, all routes to the north were cut. At one roadblock, a member of the secret police was found in an unmarked police car and was burnt alive, two others managed to escape and the fourth was taken hostage.

On the road leading to Sarandë, 50 soldiers of the regular army went over to the side of the insurrection with three tanks.

In Delvinë army divisions shot at the rebels from Mig-15's, resulting in dozens of deaths. Two pilots who refused to shoot at the population fled in a Mig-15 and asked for political asylum in Italy. The decomposition of the army by the struggle was such that even the officers refused to shoot at "civilians". Berisha thought he could count on a real force, but he had to realise quickly that, in spite of his reorganisations, the army was not prepared to confront the insurgents.

Faced with the military triumph of the insurrection, the bourgeoisie reorganised and strengthened its political response. An *Autonomous Local Council* was set up in Sarandë, led by officials in the bourgeois opposition, as well as a *Defence Council* directed by a retired colonel. These Councils formulated conditions for the handing over of weapons: early elections, sacking President Berisha and the formation of a government of technocrats to ensure the transition. One of the first measures taken by these Councils was to organise teams of "self-defence against looters" and "protectors of property"! These wheeler-dealing politicians were in direct contact with Berisha and stressed to him that the army surrounding Sarandë should abstain from intervening because they knew that, if it did, they would no longer be able to control anything. The entirety of the bourgeois fractions were looking for the means to liquidate/control the movement. In this way, the most capable fraction would go on to improve its position in the balance of forces compared to other fractions. Thus, in the name of the battle for democracy, the leader of the *Defence Council* of the city ordered the rebels to stop wearing masks (corresponding to the police's need to identify those heading the movement!). Every day started with a broadcast of the Albanian national anthem.

It is clear that it was not the proletariat that was expressing itself in these Councils. Handing back weapons in exchange for a new government, respect for private property, saluting the flag... it was, without doubt, the bourgeoisie's programme. These Councils represented a further attempt by the bourgeois opposition par-

ties to regain control of the movement, reorganise themselves in a far more pernicious manner than that which aimed its canons on rebel cities.

There was no doubt for the rebel proletarians that the army opposing them was an enemy to fell (by disarming it, fraternising with soldiers, demoralising it, pushing for its decomposition...) but they failed to recognise the bourgeois at their sides, who were also armed and supposedly fighting against a "common enemy", as being the other face of the same enemy. And yet the opposition parties were sharpening their knives as much against the Berisha government as against the proletariat. The bourgeois opposition, which took up arms against the government, with the aim of directing them principally against the proletariat, used the fight against chaos and economic disorganisation to present itself as the only valid alternative, that is the unique alternative capable of feeding proletarians.

Despite this sabotage, Wednesday 5th March marked a further extension of the insurrection. The insurrectional movement spread to Memaliaj and Tepelenë, where proletarians took to the streets, burned down the police station and pillaged shops. Burnt out carcasses were used to build barricades. The rebels got hold of heavy weapons from the artillery brigade. Mortars, canons, anti-aircraft batteries, ground-air missiles all passed into the hands of the rebels who set them up on the hills over the city.

In Gramsh (15km from Gjirokaster) the insurgents captured a small bridge from the soldiers who were controlling it and dynamited it in order to prevent tanks from advancing.

In the north, less affected by the movement, the government distributed five thousand weapons to members of the Democratic Party in order to confront the rebels. Solid roadblocks were built at the entrance and the exit of every town, in order to control all movements.

On Thursday 6th March and the following days, the uprising reached more and more towns and villages.

In order to fight against the passivity of the army, Berisha announced the arrest of 4 officers who were accused of failing to defend their barracks against pillaging. The government also demanded the extradition of two Albanian pilots who had fled to Italy aboard a MIG-15. They were charged with desertion.

However Berisha became obliged to realise that there was no point in continuing to give orders if these were not followed. He would only add to the ridicule of the armed forces. Defeatism would spread even more widely.

Finally, in an attempt to decrease tension, as much on the side of the insurgents as on what was left of his army, he suspended military operations in the South for 48 hours (until 6am on Sunday 9th March) and promised an amnesty for those giving up weapons stolen from the army... providing they had not committed any crime! This reserved the State the right to condemn all those who had taken up arms!

Apart from this, having refused all collaboration with the opposition up until then, he was obliged, under pressure from European delegations, a Greek diplomatic mission, warnings from the American government, events... to accept an initial meeting. This was a true call by the worldwide bourgeoisie to reestablish national unity against the proletariat! In the face of proletarian danger, competing bourgeois parties, the Democratic Party and the opposition parties felt the need to ally their forces and they called for calm jointly.

In reply, the insurgents reinforced their positions. The timescale for handing over weapons, the promise of amnesty, calls for calm were all rejected unanimously.

Vlorë, Sarandë, Delvinë, Gjirokaster and Tepelenë remained in the hands of the rebels. Anticipating further attacks by the army, the rebels reinforced their defence systems, put up blocks and control points in order to delay the advance of the armed forces.

In Sarandë, tanks taken from the armed forces were deployed at the entrance to the town.

The movement spread to Himaren and Samilia...

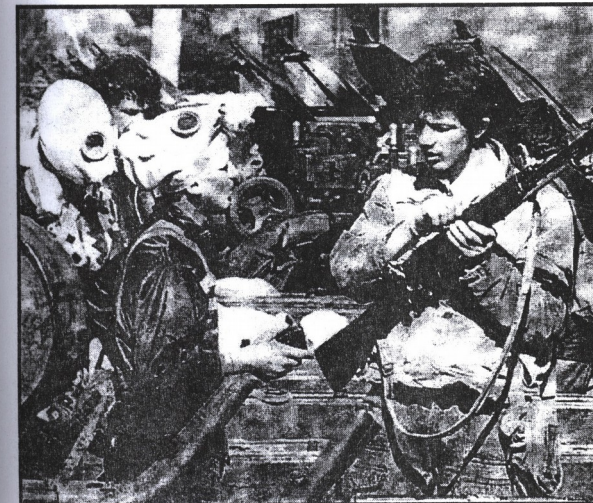
It is important to stress here that it was the proletariat, by its will, by its determination to fight whatever the cost, that defeated the army. It was proletarian combativity which sowed the seeds of defeatism in the ranks of the army and which brought about the defeat of movements of troops still faithful to their posts. In the ranks of the proletariat there were celebrations, euphoria, their determination had paid off, they had achieved a real victory.

But the proletarians lost everything when they believed the promises of change. Later they only gave up arms after more than a few threats (instead of promises), especially now that they know that handing over weapons means letting the SHIK take charge of repression, which can only be terrible!

At that moment the proletariat was in a position of strength, armed to the teeth, determined not to be walked over. But this was also the moment at which the crucial question arose of determining with more clarity which direction to give to future confrontations.

What to do with this force? What extension and what objectives to give to the struggle? Against whom to direct all these weapons? Against the governmental forces alone? What to do with this power it had in its hands? It was controlling entire towns, the roads leading to them... food shortages were beginning, there was a need to organise supplies. On what criteria? Those of the *Autonomous Local Council* of Sarandë calling for the defence of private property? What direction to give all of this?

It seems that the proletariat was not able to answer



*"Nowhere did the conscripts in the barracks oppose the pillaging. On the contrary, soldiers everywhere and even the majority of officers gave the rebels a warm welcome. There was even fraternisation: proletarians in uniform recognised themselves in the struggle of their insurgent class brothers and joined the movement armed."*



all of these questions. The question of which direction to give the struggle was left in the hands of the bourgeois opposition which, on its part, did not wait for it to decide before confiscating it from the proletariat. On the contrary, the counter-revolution profited from this moment of indecision to regain the upper hand.

Fertile ground to isolate revolution in one region and to impose limits on the revolutionary action of the proletariat rests always on the belief, carried from generation to generation, that only the bourgeois order is capable of bringing about solutions: "*we cannot live without money*", "*the police are necessary*",... "*without all of that it would be chaos*". Internationally, not only was there no other important proletarian struggle, but the isolation of the proletariat in Albania was reinforced by the systematic cover-up of everything that was going on. The worldwide bourgeoisie ensured that across the world the talk was not of proletarian struggle, nor revolution in Albania, but of chaos, disorder, anarchy.

National and international counter-revolution deployed its *Defence Committees*, *Public Protection*, humanitarian aid... if the revolution is incapable of giving food, then the counter-revolution will do it. Everywhere it was a question of substituting the real alternative of proletarian revolution versus capitalist reorganisation for National Salvation versus generalised chaos. Thus they achieved submission to "*public protection*", to the "*safeguard of the nation*", etc.

The extreme tension that had kept all the armed proletarians alert and ready for combat gave way to a certain numbness... whilst the others organised themselves!

The same day in Vlorë, a *Committee of Public Protection* (a cartel of all the parties of the bourgeois opposition, presided over by the local leader of the Forum for Democracy) and a *Defence Committee* (formed by ex-officers thrown out of the army during the purges led by Berisha in recent years) were created. During their first press conference the CPP representatives lorded it under a big Albanian flag. It was the same at Sarandë, where they made conditions for the surrender of weapons: early elections and the formation of a government of technocrats to ensure the transition, withdrawal of the army from the hills surrounding the city. The whole programme of the bourgeois opposition was asserted once again. This is illustrated by the measures that followed. On the 10th March, the CPP launched an appeal for "*all honest policemen*" to present themselves in order to help "*reestablish calm and peace*". On the 11th march, in a declaration signed with the Italian ambassador to Tirana, the CPP committed itself to "*favorise the immediate handing over of weapons in the possession of inhabitants*" and to "*ensure public order and the*




## "Revolution"

"The list of words used to define what is happening ('the events') in Albania is long: there is a refusal to use the word revolution. They had assured us that there would never be another revolution in Europe: yet here one is. The 'rebels', 'those who have risen up', who produce 'chaos' or anarchy... are rebels, mutineers. And they pillage.

Yet not one radio, one television, one newspaper has used the word 'revolution'. It does not suit them to do so. It is an event in the face of which the European editorial writers remain perplexed; particularly the Spanish, drugged by the Basque issue... like the government, the politicians, the thinkers who frequently stop thinking...

'Revolution', now defined by Miguel Artola (from the Emeritus Free College) 'is a violent action giving rise to a change in regime and a new society. Violence is inevitable and it will not be easy to predict or apply which violence which will be sufficient and which will be unnecessary to conquer the ruling power'... it started because a democratic bank was created to rob the people of their savings. Another started when a handful of Black Sea sailors refused to eat rotten meat. But it is always because of something else. Albanians lived many years under the oppression of a very particular communist regime; democracy arrived from the West and stole their savings. They have loads of good reasons to oppose this order with chaos!"

(Eduardo Haro Tecglen - Visto/óido  
*El País* 15/3/1997)



*progressive return to administrative normality*" of the city.

As in Sarandë, these Committees/Councils were guarantors of the disarmament of the proletariat, the return to bourgeois order, to peace... guarantors of capital. They meant to defend the State monopoly on arms, respect for the private property of the rich and the trading of proletarians' labour force (walking meat to haggle over).

Peace, for them, signifies disarming the proletariat in order to return to social peace. Peace which is not peace. For the bourgeois State it is a question of ensuring its monopoly on arms so that, in the perpetual war that it wages on the proletariat, the proletariat should be dispossessed of any response, by unable to arm its anger. Their peace is waging their war in peace, against an enemy without defence. Proletarians muzzled, feet and hands tied, this is the programme of our bourgeois.

Even the demand for reimbursement of their savings lost in the pyramid operations took second place.

This demand did, during the strongest moments of the movement, undergo the revolutionary transformation from a demand for State intervention into a practical critique of bourgeois economy: the armed proletariat reappropriating money stashed away in the banks.

Starting from the same demand, the counter-revolution often operated according to this outline: to neglect so-called *economic* demands: wages, food prices, here the savings,... to move onto what it classes as a higher level: the so-called *political* demands which all come back to demanding the fall of the ruling government in the name of a lack of democracy. As in Poland where Lech Walesa, still at the head of a committee of strikers in Gdansk, said: "*It is better to have rights than a full plate*". And the struggle that had started from a proletarian point of view, against increases in the price of meat, that is against an increase in the rate of exploitation, was deviated into a struggle for democratic reforms and finally for a new government (9). In Albania also, the demand for full reimbursement of the money put in building societies, the loss of which meant a brutal aggravation of living conditions for most proletarians, was put to one side in order to emphasise the demand for early elections and Berisha's resignation.

Through this passage from a so-called *economic*

demand to a so-called *political* demand, the counter-revolution organised the abandonment of the class terrain to the profit of the terrain of bourgeois reform.

Later, once the change in government has been carried out and in the face of the fact that the State will not reimburse the proletarians (!), the rhetoric will put all the responsibility on the old government, accusing it of having handled things so badly that it is difficult to bring things back on track, that conditions are difficult, that they need time and, above all, that everyone must set to it to put the economy back on an even keel. Which means, for the proletarians, tightening their belts further... always in the name of a brighter future. And as long as proletarians let themselves be fooled by these kind of promises, this is how it will be!

On Friday 7th March, the insurgents in the south were still refusing to hand over their weapons. On the contrary, arsenals were still being pillaged.

The EEC called for President Berisha to defer armed intervention for as long as possible and to convene early elections. However, despite these pressures and the first step towards joint organisation of the "surrender of rebels" with the opposition parties, Berisha still refused to envisage elections.

At Tepelenë a similar *Committee for Public Protection* was set up.

On Saturday 8 March in Gjirokaster the insurrection gained ground. During the 48 hour truce which the government itself had declared, six government helicopters landed at the town's airport and 65 special service agents from Tirana got out. A group of insurgents had tried to stop them landing while men, women and children headed for the barracks to seize arms. They got hold of impressive reserves of arms and ammunition with the enthusiastic support of some two thousand soldiers who were happy to desert and join the ranks of the insurgents. A large quantity of rifles, revolvers, grenade launchers, bazookas, machine pistols, grenades, ammunition, mines and seven tanks fell into the hands of the insurgents. The customs office was also attacked.

On the side of the government forces it was every man for himself. Three helicopters were taken by the insurgents. The others managed to take off with only the pilot on board. The troops who had landed, deprived

(9) On this subject read the articles that we have written at that time: "Pologne: 'Solidarité'... avec l'économie nationale" [Poland: 'Solidarity'... with the national economy] and "Pologne: quelle victoire?" [Poland: what victory?] which were published in *Le Communiste* No. 8 in November 1980; "Pologne: des accords de Gdansk au massacre" [Poland: the Gdansk agreements to massacre], *Le Communiste* No. 12, December 1981 and "Leçons des événements de Pologne" [Lessons of events in Poland] in *Le Communiste* No. 13, March 1982.



of any means of retreat, fled for the hills. The insurgents chased them with three armoured cars. Their flight lasted several days across the mountains to return to the North, avoiding the barricades, villages and other places strongly defended by the insurgents. It was a shepherd who told them about the collapse of the army and the official structures.

Barricades were set up at every crossroad in Gjirokaster. All access routes to the town were soon blocked. The insurgents took possession of the local radio. The customs buildings were looted and then burned. The insurgents also seized a frontier post with Greece. Customs officers, government employees and police officers rallied to the movement. This allowed the insurgents to go and get supplies in Greece.

Vlorë, Tepelenë, Himarë, Memaliaj, Delvinë, Sarandë and Gjirokaster, the most important towns of the South, were now in the hands of the insurgents. The triumph of the insurrection in Gjirokaster meant the loss for the government of the most important military and strategic point in the region. Some journalists commented *"It is total anarchy, there is no longer any police, no longer any State"*.

*"The army will never intervene against the civilians. It doesn't exist anymore"* said a former defence minister, Perikli Teta.

A few hours later in Gjirokaster, towards noon, a *Committee of Public Salvation* and a *Committee of Defence* were formed, presided over by General Gozhita, who had been kicked out by Berisha 18 months earlier. They called for the handing over of stolen arms and ordered that *"shops open their doors"* while declaring that *"those who commit pillage will be punished"*. At the same time they demanded the return of the soldiers who had fled to the hills... to reestablish order. The lack of proletarian autonomy was tragic, even the obscure personages who led the committees complained about it. The basis of the town committees was obviously the same as those in Sarandë and Vlorë.

On Sunday 9 March the town of Permët fell into the hands of the insurrection. The insurgents mobilised against government forces who had been dispatched to the region the previous day. The confrontations left five dead and many others wounded on the side of the insurgents. An entire brigade of soldiers went over to their side. Once the attack was repulsed the insurgents attacked, looting and destroying the police station, the court, the town hall, two banks and many shops. Barricades were set up at the entrances to the town, notably in the direction of Korça where the government forces had retreated.

The insurrectional movement seized sixteen other villages in the region of Permët.

In Permët as well, a *Committee of Public Salvation*, a cartel was constituted, representing all the opposition parties and the Democratic Party (prefiguring the accord which would follow).

The extension of the insurrectional movement and, above all, the fall of Gjirokaster (an military base indispensable for any military intervention by the government) was what convinced Berisha. It was without doubt this new element, dangerously rocking the balance of forces, which persuaded the president to agree an accord with the Socialist Party, the main bourgeois opposition party. The accord foresaw the installation of a government of "national reconciliation", the planning of new legislative elections between then and June and the enlargement of the promised amnesty to all those, civilians or soldiers, who had participated in the insurrectional movement. The two parties once again launched the appeal to hand in arms and this time fixed the waiting period at one week.

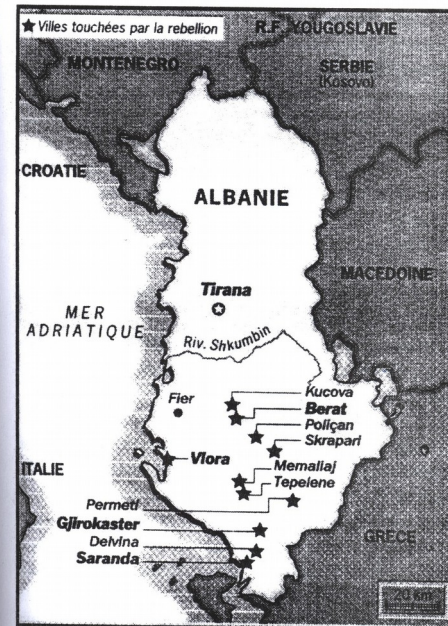
The *Committees of Public Salvation* and the *Committees of Defence* where all the parties sat, including the local representatives of the Democratic Party, and where the Socialist Party played a key role, welcomed the accord.

The Socialist Party swore that it would dissolve all the insurgent committees of the movement within three days...

At Sarandë and Vlorë the insurgents expressed their first disavowal of the politics of the Councils/Committees of Public Salvation. At Sarandë, approving the accords with Berisha, the president of the Council declared: *"Now that the president will nominate the government and a date for the elections has been fixed, arms must be handed over."* For the first time he was not applauded and the crowd dispersed in silence. On the following days there were daily gatherings in the public square which once again took on their role as an organ of decision.

At Vlorë the daily demonstration happened this time without a flag, nor a banner, nor an opposition leader and embarked on looting and burning shops. A few people suspected of belonging to the secret police were arrested. A list of people to be eliminated in exchange for a certain price was discovered on one of them.

The same day, in the North, proletarians began to take arms. They expropriated one of the biggest arms depots in the North of Albania, at Shkoder. At Peshkopia,



Lezha-Kuksi and Lacy the army fell into disorder, in the face of the generalisation of the expropriations.

On Monday 10 March the Socialist Party's bet that it would have everything in hand within three days looked seriously compromised, even more so now that the movement had extended to Skrapari, Malakstra, Kelcyra, Berat, Poliçan, Kuçova, Gramsh.

In Berat the insurgents emptied three savings banks and plundered many shops, the state food reserves and the arms factories of three barracks. The garrison and the police abandoned the town without firing a shot and the insurgents shared out the arms from the police stations and barracks. A *Committee of Public Salvation* was set up with the immediate intention of organising the handing over of arms! It also demanded the sacking of Berisha. It is obvious that whenever the bourgeoisie succeeded in imposing this demand it was only making use of the weaknesses of the proletarian movement and thus preparing its disarmament in exchange for the dismissal of Berisha and the planning of new elections.

In Gramsh (60 km to the South of Tirana) where there is an important arms factory, the insurgents seized three barracks and burnt down the police station. They set out towards Fier, a town situated to the North of the zone taken by the insurgents. They took control of several routes into the area and beat back the forces of order who partially lifted their blockade of the region.

In Skrapari the insurgents emptied the army's armouries, attacked the military airport of Kuçova and took control of Poliçan (between Skrapari and Berat) where there is an arms and ammunition factory. The clashes led to fourteen wounded.

Faced with the fact that he could no longer count on the army, Berisha armed his followers. They plundered some major arms depots in Bajram-Curri and Kukes, two small towns in the North in an inaccessible mountain area.

On Tuesday 11 March the *Committees of Public Salvation* of eight southern towns met at Gjirokastra and created a *National Front for the Salvation of the People* whose demands were the sacking of Berisha, a profound reorganisation of the secret police, the return of lost savings and the organisation of democratic parliamentary elections, thus confirming their function of trapping the movement in a bourgeois alternative. The President of the CPS of Sarandë confirmed: "There will be no question of handing over arms until the installation of democracy is guaranteed."

On the government side, a new Prime Minister, Bashkim Fino, was appointed to form a government of "national reconciliation". His first action was to recruit reinforcements for the police and to stop the uprising in Durrës, where three proletarians had been murdered.

On that day thirteen towns were in the hands of the insurgents: Poliçan, Kelsyra, Permet, Kuçova, Shrapar, Berat, Gjirokastra, Sarandë, Delvinë, Himaren, Tepelenë, Menaliaj, Vlorë.

And Kruma, Burrel and Laçi, little towns in the North, can be added to the list.

On Wednesday 12 March the situation was tense. Against all expectations, the government of "national reconciliation" did not have the desired impact on the movement. On the contrary, the measures which it took to reorganise the police hardened the position of the insurgents, whose movement continued to make gains in the North.

At Elbasan, the last stop before Tirana (coming from the South), the tension was extreme. While the army and the secret police withdrew to 50 km to the Southeast and 70 km to the Southwest of the capital, the insurgents reinforced their positions and seized the armouries left by the army. The arms, ammunition and explosives factory at Mjeksi (to the South of Elbasan) was also pillaged.

After Elbasan, the army also disappeared from Fier, Cerrick (after fighting with the secret police) and Gramsh



where the insurgents had burned the police station and plundered three barracks.

Shkoder, the most important northern town, was in turn taken by the uprising. The besieged barracks were abandoned by the soldiers. The insurgents also attacked the prisons, there they smashed down the doors and freed the detainees. A bank branch was dynamited, the court was sacked. Business premises were ripped open and surgically emptied. After having been ransacked and blazed, the town hall was now occupied by a few families. Barricades were made of half-burnt rubbish and car carcasses on a carpet of broken glass.

The important air base of Gjader, near Lehze, 80 km North of Tirana, also fell into the hands of the insurgents.

It therefore rested with the international bourgeoisie to prevent the propagation of the movement beyond the frontiers at any cost.

Faced with the danger of the extension of the movement in the North of the country which borders the Kosovo province of Serbia, where the majority of proletarians are of Albanian origin (10), the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) closed its two main frontier posts with Albania.

The governments of the USA, France and Italy called on their citizens to leave Albania. Moscow and Belgrade began to evacuate their diplomatic personnel and their families.

Military units, including a tank regiment, positioned themselves along the Shkumbin river. But in Sauk in front of the barracks in the suburbs of Tirana an officer instructor, wearing the insignia of the armoured division on his collar, declared that the army would not react in the case of an insurrection. *"We cannot fire on our people."* This sentiment was shared by almost the whole of the institution. Both the soldiers and the officers expressed this sentiment on different occasions.

Berisha's Democratic Party continued to arm its supporters around Tirana, notably in Kavaja, from then on the only town under government control south of the capital. From the North of Albania and Kosovo lorries brought well paid mercenaries. Berisha's supporters also looted arsenals in the towns of the North.

In Tirana members of the secret police entered the

military academy and three other arms depots in the area, including at the airport, and cleaned them out. Seven depots of the anti-aircraft defence brigade were emptied, one of which contained 10,000 light arms. The SHIK distributed assault rifles to its henchmen and to the loyal supporters of the Democratic Party.

The bourgeoisie made some panicky comments: *"A president who has lost all authority, a government of 'national reconciliation' which has no more of a grip on events, an army which turns and runs when the first shot is fired... never in recent history has a country on the old continent known the disintegration in such rapid succession of all its institutions, of all the instruments charged with making people respect public order. It is a question of a real collapse of the State."*

The Albanian writer Ismail Kadare (who has lived in Paris since 1990) called for the intervention of a buffer force in Albania. *"A international arbiter is needed when a whole country is heading for a precipice. It's not important what the forms and procedures are, anything is good if it prevents a tragedy on such a scale."*

Following this, all the bourgeois parties of Albania launched a joint appeal in favour of an armed intervention of the European powers *"so as to restore constitutional order"*. The decomposition of the state was such that the bourgeoisie became more and more favourable to the intervention of other international authorities so as to reestablish order.

On the 13 March the secret police was all over Tirana, having withdrawn from the regions in the South, where it had been the only force fighting the insurgents.

A convoy of armoured cars and Mercedes wound its way around the central Skanderbeg square. The SHIK men let off volleys of automatic rifle fire and shouted very loudly to show that they were again the masters of the nerve centre of Tirana. Armoured cars were deployed on Martyrs' Boulevard and Nation Boulevard where the presidential palace, parliament and other government buildings are situated.

Most of the ministries and administrations were shut, as well as banks and businesses. The streets were deserted. The firing of automatic weapons was incessant. Six people, including two children, were killed, mostly victims of stray bullets or accidental explosions of mines or grenades. The screws abandoned the prisons, letting some six hundred prisoners escape.

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(10) During the war in Yugoslavia the proletarians of this region engaged in a very important struggle. Read on this subject the article: "Yugoslavia: Imperialist War Against the World Proletariat" in *Communism* No. 9, August 1995.

Despite the omnipresence of the SHIK, Tirana did not escape the frenzy of pillaging. Masses of demonstrators from the poor neighbourhoods expropriated the food depots, among others a huge flour warehouse in the suburb of Lapraka. Other demonstrators plundered and expropriated the Police School, and in the residential district of Tirana, where there are several embassies, they succeeded in appropriating Kalashnikovs and canisters of butane. The sentries at the National Guard Headquarters (which was only 300m from these targets) didn't lift a finger in the face of this action. The barracks were pillaged as much for arms as for the supplies they were stocked with, furniture, bathroom fittings, heaters... There was nothing left of the barracks but a boneless carcass.

In the centre of Tirana the favourite targets of the proletarians were public buildings and the enterprises where work was so detestable and badly paid. Workshops, buildings... nothing was left. Even the roof beams and steel rods from the frames were taken. There was no more furniture or machinery, no more tiles or cornices, no more door frames, no light fittings. All the electric wiring and switches had been torn out, just like the wash basins and heaters, down to the smallest bit of piping. There was no more glass or sills, just holes where the windows used to be.

From now on almost every person had at least one gun, a Kalashnikov or some other type.

*"There is no army," a journalist commented, "the soldiers are abandoning the barracks and going home. The police, many of whom have exchanged their uniforms for plain clothes, are limited for the moment to looking after the prisons and official buildings. But this hasn't prevented a massive flight: in three penitentiaries the prisoners have succeeded in escaping and more than a thousand prisoners are now enjoying unexpected freedom..."*

The chief administrator of Tirana launched a televised appeal for calm in the name of all the political parties. But at the end of the afternoon Tirana seemed to be on the brink of revolt.

The loyal employees in the ministries stuffed computers and files into their vehicles, recognisable from the yellow government number plates. Soldiers and policemen deserted their posts and went home. Even the big shots of the SHIK disappeared from the scene.

The bourgeoisie abandoned Tirana.

The embassies circulated a general evacuation or-



*"At Sarandë and Vlorë the insurgents expressed their first disavowal of the politics of the Councils/ Committees of Public Salvation. At Sarandë, approving the accords with Berisha, the president of the Council (...) was not applauded and the crowd dispersed in silence. On the following days there were daily gatherings in the public square which once again took on their role as an organ of decision."*



der. A company of Marines was deployed in front of the American embassy. An air bridge was established between Italian navy units patrolling the Gulf of Tarente and the port of Durrës. Three Super-Pumas from the French airforce and two Cougars from the army, six helicopters from the German army sent from the NATO Stabilisation Force (S-FOR) in Bosnia, Cobra helicopters from the US army... and fifteen Albanian naval ships and even others from the Greek fleet were pressed into service to evacuate their respective "foreign nationals", protected by units of paratroopers and marines. On many occasions the operations were interrupted by rifle fire, anti-aircraft cannon and portable ground to air missiles.

On the evening of Wednesday 13 March, the historic town of Korça (in the southeast of the country) was looted. Proletarians went to the barracks of Poceste where they took arms and four armoured cars.

At Lezha proletarians attacked the office of the secret police (whose members had disappeared) and the State Bank where they dynamited the safe.

The worthies of the town immediately created a Committee of Safety of Lezha to try to calm down the movement. They went through the town by car making appeals for calm through a megaphone. They were drowned out by fusillades of bullets.

*"The army has collapsed, the state has faltered"...* said a journalist before leaving Tirana.



That moment marked the high point of the movement. From the South to the North, the insurrectional movement generalised itself, shaking even that bastion of the state, the capital. But if the forces of the bourgeoisie withdrew from Tirana it was so as to reorganise themselves better on a national and international level. While on the side of the proletariat they again tasted the cruel lack of perspective and of a classist direction in the midst of isolation and international incomprehension.

In effect, if the struggle in Albania marked, like the struggle in Iraq (11), a moment of rupture with the international situation of social peace, it is precisely this context of international non-struggle which prevented the movement from going further. International social peace weighs heavily on the extraordinary movement of the proletariat in Albania, just like it previously weighed

on the proletarian insurrection in Iraq. The proletariat in Albania needs to extend the struggle internationally but it finds neither the support nor the necessary comprehension from the rest of the world proletariat who, stupefied by the international campaign of the bourgeoisie, don't recognise themselves in the struggle of their class brothers and sisters in Albania and imagine even less the real force of the ruptures which have taken place.

This lack of international support calls for an even clearer affirmation of revolutionary perspectives in Albania than the proletariat has set out. But if in the course of the confrontations the proletariat has recognised the whole of its enemies, it is more difficult for them to affirm now the levels of organisation capable of thwarting the successive changes of political spare parts which allow the bourgeoisie to regain control of the situation.

When the proletariat makes an attack on the whole of the structures of the bourgeois state and defeats the army... when to private property it opposes collective appropriation, pillaging banks, warehouses, shops... when to a Justice which consecrates the omnipotence of the bourgeoisie, isolates the proletariat and leads it, riddled with rights, right to prison, it opposes collective class force, burning police stations and courts and opening the prisons... when to the peaceful protests organised by the opposition, it responds by the generalised taking up of arms... it affirms practically the spontaneously revolutionary nature of its struggle.

But to give force and continuity to these confrontations it is vital for the proletariat to build up qualitatively superior levels of organisation capable of pushing things in a clearer direction and thus assuming a well-defined break with the bourgeois alternatives. Not doing this means surrendering the ground which has been gained. Unhappily, we have to state that the proletariat in Albania does not appear to have produced regroupments, associations, organs or whatever, which are true to its nature, which call for class actions, which express, by their very existence, the necessity of organising outside and against the bourgeois state, which clearly call for the destruction of the state, the international generalisation of struggle, the affirmation of the communist movement (12). In the course of the revolutionary process, the point always comes where a qualitative jump is indispensable in direction, in internationalism. If the proletariat does not provide one, the bourgeoisie will just use the circumstances to reorganise itself.

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(11) Cf. our articles "About the class struggle in Iraq" in this review; "Additional notes on the insurrection of March 1991 in Iraq" and "Nationalism and islamism against the proletariat"; read also "War or revolution" and "A comrade's testimony: a journey to Iraq" in *Communism* No. 7.

Thus, once the anger had exploded, the army had been defeated, the bourgeoisie of Tirana had fallen prey to panic, the question was posed of *what to do* with this position of strength acquired in the course of the confrontations. What was at stake at that moment was the need for a much clearer definition and delimitation of our enemies. Without this, the opposition movements which the bourgeoisie had created to give a political direction to the conflict – oppositionists who had habitually marched next to the proletariat in confrontations with the state – succeeded in confining it to a simple opposition to the government of Berisha.

When the proletariat made a critique of the electoral point of view by taking over the streets and attacking all the structures of the state, when the proletariat shouted “*Down with Berisha!*”, a slogan which in a limited and confused way said “*Down with the state!*”, the opposition transformed everything into a demand for the anticipated elections, a solution advocated by the world bourgeoisie to negate the initial critique made by our class.

The sort of qualitative jump which would exclude the democratic trap would have consisted of translating into slogans or, to put it another way, inscribing on the banners of the movement, the strict reality of what was happening in the streets! “*Down with Berisha!*” would then have been replaced by slogans reflecting the real movement: “*Down with the state, its cops and its politicians in the government and in the opposition!*”, “*Down with parliament!*”, “*Down with elections!*”, “*Long live the generalised arming of the proletariat!*” Of course, it isn’t just a question of words. It’s a matter of making conscious what is going on in reality, of consciously taking on the revolutionary direction that the struggle of the proletariat naturally takes (13) of clearly brandishing the flag of communism. Throughout the history of our class, even in the strongest moments of the struggle, it happens that what the proletariat says about its own struggle remains behind its real practice. Thus in Albania, the unifying flag of the movement remained

an extremely poor one which never really went beyond the conservative slogan “*Down with Berisha!*”, a slogan which gave the Socialist opposition all the arms it needed to recuperate the movement.

Sticking to the slogan “*Down with Berisha!*” meant accepting (as the opposition avidly hoped) that once Berisha was discarded there would be no more reason to struggle. In fact, the sacking of Berisha did become the condition for handing over arms.

As is often the case in any movement of struggle, it happened once again that it is not combativity which is lacking but the clear definition of class objectives. Here, again, it is not arms or courage which proletarians lack (as is generally believed by militarists and guerrilla-ists of all kinds) but a clear definition of what to turn their arms against.

It is that which was the limit of the break which proletarians made with the counter-revolution. At that high point, while the proletariat didn’t do anything to take the movement forward, the international bourgeoisie beat out a call to organise support for the Albanian state in its struggle against the insurrection. On one side was the unified world bourgeoisie, and on the other was the proletariat in Albania – isolated. The bourgeoisie possesses a very long experience of how to defeat the proletariat country by country. And what is most tragic is that it will continue to be this way as long as the proletariat does not organise itself as an international force and does not give itself a revolutionary centralisation/direction.



(12) We don’t want to prejudge here whether minorities have adopted a communist practice which situates them in the historic line of the party, or whether this type of group will develop in the immediate future on the basis of lessons learned. What we have to assert again is the lack of **strength** of the revolutionary perspective, the small amount of organisation and the absence of revolutionary propaganda proportional to the force and massive scale of the movement in Albania.

(13) It should be very clear that we never use the term “revolutionary leadership” in the immediate and restricted sense of a precise collection of people, of a group or a “party”. By revolutionary leadership we mean the historic trajectory of the proletariat aiming at the realisation of its revolutionary programme, looking to define the whole of the necessary strategy which it must develop to destroy capitalism, looking to assert the programmatic whole contained in its very existence as the opposition to the society of capital, a programmatic whole which determines every tactic and function of the revolutionary objective: communist society. Thus the movement for the revolutionary destruction of capitalist society can only develop itself in opposition to democracy which is the mode of organisation of capital in all its forms. Cf. our *Theses of Programmatic Orientation*. As for people, groups and “parties”, if they take on revolutionary leadership it can only be in the historic sense.



# The Restructuring of Bourgeois

## Order in Albania

On Friday 14 March the European Union assured Albania of its support in the form of humanitarian aid. A member of the Defence Commission of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Western European Union (in a word: a bourgeois) declared:

*"We have all the military capacity needed to calm things down and take control of this matter. On condition that we hit hard and fast."*

*"The Eurocorps comprises 50,000 fully operational men. A force of some 10,000 soldiers, hardly a fifth of the effective number, heavily equipped and armoured, would be sufficient to take the situation in hand."*

*"And to contain the insurgents and make them hand over their Kalashnikovs? The means of pressure that we have are largely sufficient. For example, establishing a sort of exchange: the handover of stolen arms against the provision of food."*

Here we have a good description of what the bourgeoisie intend to do by means of humanitarian aid: the disarmament of the proletariat by military intimidation and the threat of starvation!

On 15 March Berisha launched an appeal to volunteers wanting to maintain order in the capital to join the Albanian army or police in return for a salary of four hundred dollars a month, which is equivalent to four times the average salary. The government also promised to triple the wages of police officers who returned to their posts. More than a thousand former officers presented themselves at the Ministry of Defence so as to patch up the army whereas thousands of young people joined the ranks of the police – without any need to show their papers when enrolling! Rifles and ammunition were distributed to them.

On 16 March the Albanian state received the support of its Italian and Greek brothers who were ready to send experts to advise the Albanian police and army and to help them reestablish order.

On 17 and 18 March some experts from the EU came to Tirana to talk to the Albanian government with the aim of evaluating the importance and scope of a humanitarian aid mission.

While these gentlemen discussed how to "normalise the situation in Albania", what was happening in the streets changed its character little by little. Whereas before it came alive, full of proletarians discussing the next action, whereas before it was a place for all the assaults, looting, burning, barricades... step by step the street was given up to confrontations of a completely different nature.

To explain this, we are going to take a little detour.

The capitalist mode of production places each unit of production in opposition to the others and thus generates a perpetual war of all against all. The opening of Albania's borders cruelly laid bare these contradictions and made them explode. This was not in the sense that these contradictions were a novelty for Albania - the laws of capitalism have always reigned there! - but because the attempt to run the Albanian economy in a protectionist way imposed until then a certain discipline on the bourgeoisie, a discipline made possible by relatively low real wages (compared to other countries). But this only postponed the bursting forth of all these contradictions, and it was precisely this postponement (a practice inherent in any kind of populist and protectionist capitalism) which aggravated the explosion when it became inevitable. It is also for that reason that the permanent war which the bourgeoisie dedicate themselves to was conducted in such a chaotic manner when everything exploded.

When Albania opened its frontiers a mob of young and ruthless capitalists piled in and took over whole sectors, attracted by the low level of wages and avid to enrich themselves rapidly on what they thought was an innocent, naive and domesticated proletariat. But this only exacerbated the competitive struggle for a quick profit and before long the situation transformed itself into a war of plunder concretely expressed by innumerable armed confrontations within the bourgeoisie, ending up as a chaotic struggle between enterprises and rival mafias (just like in other countries such as the ex-USSR).

In this framework the Berisha government itself seems to have obeyed its private interests, concentrated around the Democratic Party, rather than the more global interests of the bourgeoisie in its entirety. As a general rule,

the sectors of the bourgeoisie which control the central apparatus of the state are assured of that hegemony precisely because they have proved their capacity to put their private interests to one side for the profit of the general interests of their class. It seems that here Berisha, notably through the pyramid companies, was rather more occupied with his personal fortune than with the interests of the bourgeoisie in general and the cohesion of the state. It is that which also explains without doubt why bourgeois fractions could be found behind the slogan "Down with Berisha!".

In the month of March 1997, in the midst of the insurrectional movement of the proletariat, and taking part in the destabilisation of the state, various fractions of the bourgeoisie benefited from the passage to military action and settled some accounts. Apart from the followers of Berisha who took advantage of the situation of general illegality to pillage the barracks so as to arm themselves, others profited from this same situation to arm themselves and militarily protect their factories, shops and other businesses. Thus a good many bosses (14) who yesterday had come to Albania because the workforce there was available at a good price and because the laws allowed them to run their affairs a little more to their liking, without caring about taxes or social protection laws, today found themselves no longer able to count on the police to protect their private property. These big bosses and owners therefore surrounded themselves with private militias, surveillance squads, vigilance committees, "armed bands" to save their business activity from generalised looting - a task which these militias had never been able to practically assume elsewhere in the course of the movement.

Groups of armed proletarians were more and more caught between the armed bosses' militias, the *Councils of Public Salvation*, *Committees of Safety*, *Committees of Defence*... which also armed themselves to reestablish order.

With the aim of delivering a *coup de grâce* and adding to the general confusion which would succeed in disarming the proletariat, the media put into the same bag the actions of the armed proletariat and the actions of the militias defending private property. "Armed bands" (15) became the name used to amalgamate actions of a

completely different nature solely on the basis that they were armed.

Looting, for example, can have a completely different class nature depending on who does it and what the content of their action is. When proletarians loot goods or arms depots, it is our class which is criticising private property, the state and the whole of the capitalist social relation. This expropriation expresses the interests of humanity. It is a matter of collective appropriation, of a reappropriation of what proletarians have produced but of which they are always deprived. It is the proletariat which is feeding and arming its struggle against the state and the reign of commodities.

When other apparently similar looting of arms and goods depots is carried out, whether by merchants who are organising a traffic in foodstuffs which have become scarce by selling them to proletarians at outrageous prices... whether they are militias engaged in protecting capitalist enterprises... whether they are the lackeys of Berisha... it is clear that the criteria are not the same. It is not the interests of humanity which are being expressed here, but rather those of profit, those of the age-old tyranny of the rate of profit against the human being. It is a matter of private appropriation, for the private interests of groups of bourgeois who struggle to impose their fractional interests and who aim to improve their position in the war of competition between capitals. It is the perpetuation in arms of the capitalist system.

Another example is the attacks on police stations, which can also take on completely different natures. When merchants attack police stations because the police try to take control of their commerce, or demand a percentage, they are leading an inter-bourgeois war for control of the market. This attack is completely integrated into the reproduction of the capitalist system. On the other hand, when the proletariat attack a police station, liquidate its occupants and burn the buildings of repression, they are attacking their mortal enemy, which represses them directly and which keeps them deprived of all property, the capitalist state. Their action is an integral part of the process of destroying the bourgeois State.

The "armed bands" who plunder goods depots and

(14) There are around 400 enterprises between Tirana, Durrës, Lushnjë and Fier. Some are the product of French and German initiatives and capital but the majority are Italian. The most important 120 enterprises constitute a mass of investments of 200 to 250 million dollars and comprise 30,000 jobs. In 1994, for example, the implantation of a bottling industry by Coca-Cola necessitated an investment of 20 million dollars and a hundred workers, in the high season!

(15) In exactly the same way that in Italy, the State created a category of a-classist "armed band" with the ultimate aim of condemning class violence! You can read about this subject in: "Italy: the Repression is Reinforced" in *Communism* No. 10, May 1997.



*"Tirana did not escape the frenzy of pillaging. Masses of demonstrators from the poor neighbourhoods expropriated the food depots, among others a huge flour warehouse in the suburb of Lapraka."*

*"When proletarians loot goods or arms depots, it is our class which is criticising private property, the State and the whole of the capitalist social relation. This expropriation expresses the interests of humanity."*



barracks and attack police stations so as to carry on their own war of competition constitute the armed wing of the counter-revolution, that which restores terror against the proletariat.

Thus, a road block installed in Vlorë extorted money from all the car drivers who passed by. If they didn't obey they were simply riddled with bullets.

Again, while the proletariat in arms have organised road blocks to stop the advance of troops, to arrest members of the secret police, to defend their struggle, including to obtain funds for this, those who extort money from car drivers – an a-classist category – have nothing in common with this struggle and put themselves completely on the side of the State, which carries out this kind of intimidation every day. The newspapers referred to the extorters as "bandits", "rebels", "Mafiosi", "scum"... the same title they gave to any proletarian who takes up arms against the state. It is clear that here we are talking about a private militia in the service of capitalist order. This armed band (a boss and his lackeys) which rampaged around Vlorë in competition with the *Committee of Defence*, called like everyone else for the sacking of Berisha (but with the aim of doing some good illegal business), and little by little took over the control of defence groups and the circulation of arms. They coldly assassinated those who did not obey their orders. To defend their private mercantile interests this armed band imposed the usual bourgeois terror and, in that way, defended private capitalist interests in general. A journalist's description: *"Criminal organisations have taken advantage of the situation of disorder in Albania to do some business, notably in the traffic of drugs and arms. Italian businessmen have continuous business relations with their Albanian colleagues."*

And, to complete the description of the eminently counter-revolutionary role of this "armed band", here is a proclamation by its leader on the arrival of the Italian troops: *"The Italian soldiers are our brothers... If anyone touches a hair on their heads they must do it over my dead body."*

Other examples:

\* On the Greek border an "armed band" took control of a crossing point and extorted from proletarians who were going to stock up with supplies in Greece.

\* In Tirana, a bus was machine gunned to force it to stop so that the assailants could rob the passengers.

But there were also proletarian responses against these armed bands which aimed to rob proletarians.

On 27 March, for example, there was a class response to a band who came to extort from a village. Strongly armed from looting an important barracks, the inhabitants refused the racketeers, defended themselves and avenged their eighteen dead.

Traffickers in "meat on the hoof" also hoped to do some good business from the new wave of emigration. Thus more than ten thousand refugees clandestinely arrived on the Italian coasts (a smaller number than in 1991 when it had been more than forty thousand). They were rapidly repatriated to Albania (16). Diplomats, ambassadors and company managers were not considered to be "foreign nationals" – ships, helicopters and planes were chartered for their evacuation. On the contrary, here we are talking about simple proles who fled to Italy either because they were attracted by the myth of the Western paradise or because they wanted to escape re-

pression. They paid between 500 and 1000 dollars for a place on an old tub that might not even get there (17). At Durrës those who ran this commerce in meat on the hoof knew how to be efficient! A fleet of more than a hundred speed boats allowed them to control the whole coast and organise their commerce, particularly with Italy and Greece. On the coast they touted for business and gathered their candidates, carefully avoiding telling them what was waiting for them in Italy! At sea they threatened fishermen and captains of boats so as to keep control of the traffic. The police were complicit and did not stop them from giving themselves over to their smuggling.

On the basis of these examples we can understand the ease with which the bourgeoisie have amalgamated proletarian actions with those of armed bands of unscrupulous merchants without any criteria apart from those of the bourgeoisie: profit and the war of all against all. It is the bourgeois themselves who call proletarians in arms mafia, gangsters, savages, rapists... cannibals! We can also understand why proletarians felt more and more trapped between these "armed bands", one lot, responding strictly to their private interests, going around with the immediate aim of grabbing as much cash as possible, and the others (the *Committees of Defence, Safety or Public Salvation*) whose aims corresponded more to the general interests of the world bourgeoisie: the reestablishment of the social peace in an area where proletarian anger had been expressed the most strongly.

Such are the bases on which the confrontations at the beginning of the movement progressively gave way to confrontations of a completely different nature. We will now return to the unfolding of actual events.

On Monday 19 March, representatives of the government and of international organisations discussed the objectives of the intervention and how to dispatch the humanitarian aid. The North American state was opposed to a military intervention by NATO (18), the German state defined the conflict as "*an internal affair*". The experts agreed in rejecting direct military intervention to reestablish order in Albania (they were aware of the danger of generalisation) and considered it more effective to help the army and the police, so that these institutions could reestablish the authority of the state, and to assure the protection of airports, embassies and the main official buildings. In other words the bourgeoisie knew that they must not make the mistake of carrying out an overt repression, as Berisha had done, because this had only had the effect of galvanising the combativity of proletarians in struggle. The bourgeoisie knew that to reestablish social peace the stick was not enough, the carrot was also vital. It would be much more effective to present their intervention as humanitarian aid. They knew that it had to be presented as something which fed proletarians and therefore constituted the only solution to the problem of survival. It only remained to decide on the means. Meanwhile, the government of Bashkim Fino, supported by the EU, was invited to take urgent measures of "*social and humanitarian assistance*" to pacify the country. The forces of the world bourgeoisie then arranged an intervention where the unified foreign presence would support the local repressive forces and use humanitarian action as a shopfront.

On 20 March the Italian army carried out its first operation on Albanian soil. Marine infantry from an élite unit landed on a beach close to the port of Durrës.

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(16) On 19 March the Italian government decreed a state of emergency over the whole territory of Italy until 30 June 1997. This involved the reinforcement of controls exercised by the patrolling forces of order not just on the frontiers but across the whole country. The decree also called for the immediate repatriation of those who, linked in one way or another to criminality, were considered to be undesirable – a category which, as we know from experience, is extendable to the all proletarians who have taken up arms against the state. The same day, 289 people of Albanian origin and considered dangerous were taken under heavy guard to Tirana on board Italian army helicopters. Others received the status of "refugees" and had the right to a resident's permit for 60 days, extendable to 90 days, the time taken to "normalise" the situation in Albania. Independent of the content of their respective ideologies the collaboration between police forces was total, as always!

(17) On 20 March 400 refugees whose boat was on the point of sinking into the Adriatic were led back to the port of Durrës by the Italian army. On 28 March, following an intervention on the high seas by an Italian army motor launch to force a boat full of migrants to change direction, the overfull boat sank, leaving 87 dead and/or disappeared. On 4 May, 1223 migrants who had arrived in the Italian port of Bari piled on board a tanker were returned to Albania. The first group of 180 men was immediately returned under strong escort to Durrës. The boat had been bought for 100,000 dollars and each passenger had paid between 500 and 600 dollars for the trip. The greater is the scale of human misery, the higher is the rate of profit: in this case capital recovered the whole of its investment in a single cycle!

(18) We have already stressed the kind of intervention policy of the US state as well as its fundamental orientation. Cf. "L'armée et la politique militaires des Etats-Unis d'Amérique" in *Le Communiste* No. 12 and 13. The Albanian example clearly expresses the understanding of this state, with regards to which action to take when the proletarian struggle attacks the State.



## TO OUR READERS

COMRADES,

*A review like this can only fully succeed in its task of organizing communist action if it has active participation of its readers and sympathisers.*

*Any contribution you make - theoretical, critical or practical - will help us to forge a real revolutionary tool.*

*Use this material! It is no one's private property - it is part of the heritage of the accumulated experience of our class. The class that is fighting to destroy wage-labour and so all classes, all exploitation. Use these texts, discuss them, reproduce them,...*

*If our positions interest you - if you want to discuss them or to work with us - contact the INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST GROUP by writing to the following address (without mentioning the group's name on the envelope):*

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